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THROUGH RUSSIA.

VOL. I.

KREMLIN WITH THE PALACE AND ARSENAL.

THROUGH RUSSIA:

FROM

ST. PETERSBURG TO ASTRAKHAN AND THE CRIMEA.

BY

MRS. GUTHRIE.

CALMUCK PRIESTS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE

In placing these volumes before the public, it will perhaps not be amiss to preface them with a few words.

My daughter and myself left London with the intention of studying the Art collections contained in the museums of Dresden, Berlin, Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, and perhaps Moscow; and of then finding our way down the Danube, and, *viâ* Constantinople, Smyrna, and the Piræus, to Rome, where we designed to winter.

We were, however, induced to make a slight alteration in our plans. During the month we spent in Moscow, we got so thoroughly interested in Russia and its people, that we did not like the idea of retracing our steps without seeing more of them. "All roads lead to Rome." Why not descend the Volga, and cross the Crimea?

The Volga is a mighty river—the main artery of Russia, serving as it does to connect the White Sea

with the Caspian, and the Baltic with Siberia. We consulted our friend, the French Consul at Moscow, upon the subject, and he assured us that it was a journey which ladies might undertake with perfect propriety; so we determined upon the route.

How we sped, the following pages will tell; and if they should tempt other travellers to follow in our steps with the same keen sense of pleasure which we enjoyed, the vast extent of Russian territory and seaboard embraced in our travels will not have been traversed in vain.

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THROUGH RUSSIA.

CHAPTER I.

Gulf of Bothnia—Abo—Finns and Lapps—The Church Vault—Intricate Navigation—Helsingfors—Market on the Quay—The Coin of Finland—University o Abo—Splendid Church—A Scene of Fairy Land—The Fête of St. John—Viborg—The Neva—Cronstadt—First View of St. Petersburg—Expenses of Living in the Russian Capital—The Nevsky Prospekt—Splendid Shops—Inquisitive Old Gentleman.

AFTER spending some time in visiting the most interesting localities in Denmark and Sweden, we determined to extend our travels to Russia; and learning at Stockholm that the *Princess Dagmar* was to start almost immediately on her voyage to St. Petersburg, we proceeded, without loss of time, to see what accommodation that vessel afforded. With the prospect of being three nights at sea, a

comfortable cabin was necessary, and we were fortunate in finding one which just suited us. The night before sailing we went on board, and settled ourselves as comfortably as we could. The passengers were numerous, but the only English-speaking portion of them were two compatriots and an American family. When we sailed in the morning, the wind was cold, and the rain and mist so thick that we could see nothing while crossing the wide-mouthed Gulf of Bothnia; and we were glad when, after a dull voyage, we glided into a river, passed a strong fort, and stopped at Abo, where the luggage had to be searched.

Whilst this operation was going on, the weather improved, and we took the opportunity of landing, anxious to see the beauties of Finland. We found an immensely wide street, in which grass grew abundantly, bordered by low, painted wooden houses, with pointed and gabled roofs and sheltering eaves; white and green being the prevailing colours. Abo was once a town of importance and learning, but for some reason or other the university was removed, and it has since declined. Finn is properly the name of the Lapps belonging to Norway and the district of Finland; the natives of the Grand-Duchy of Finland being

called Quains. They are good-tempered people, do not like change, and make brave soldiers and sailors. The Finlanders in the Russian army are on a totally different footing from the common Russian soldier—they are enrolled in six battalions of riflemen, and are all volunteers, receiving high pay. The Finns, or Quains, like Irishmen, spread themselves into neighbouring countries, in search of work; and in Norway almost all the miners are Finns.

The area of Abo is said to be as large as that of Dresden. This arises from the dread of fire, that induces the inhabitants to place their rows of wooden houses far apart, which adds to the comfortless look of the place. We entered a vast red brick church, which reminded us of those at Lübeck. The interior was lofty and fine; and the walls were frescoed with scenes from Finnish history. In a side-chapel stands the tomb of Christina of Sweden, whom we had supposed to be buried under the monument erected to her memory in St. Peter's. It is an ugly erection, in the shape of a sarcophagus. A more interesting memorial is that raised to the memory of a Sir —— Cockburn, who seems to have served as a sort of free lance in the Thirty Years' War. There was a large collection of monuments in memory of knights and

ladies, with their coats-of-arms in marble, alabaster, and granite.

When we were about to depart, our good-natured Finnish guide objected; and, lighting a candle, preceded us down a ladder into a long vault, where a most singular sight presented itself. In rows of wooden chests, most of them with the lids off, were seen the knights, ladies, church dignitaries, even little children, all in the dress of their times, so completely salted by the briny air, and dried by the cold, that their skin appeared to be in perfect preservation, although shrivelled. Age, however, had dismembered one grandee, who had fallen to pieces, and whose remains were mixed up with his garments, a red velvet cloak still retaining its colour. One coffin was as large as a four-post bed. The body it contained was richly clad in ample robes of white silk, to which time had given a creamy colour; and on the hands were kid gloves. It was afterwards a matter of dispute between us whether the individual in question was a stately old lady or a bishop; but I do not think we shall ever return to Abo to settle the question. A little baby, a girl, lay in a corner, its wrists tied with blue ribbon, according to Northern custom. A boy would have worn pink. The

guide made signs that it belonged to the lady, whose effigy, in jewelled robe and marble ruff, we had seen above. Our Finn took hold of its arm, and bent it, but it slowly recovered its straight position.

There is said to be a fine view from the rising ground behind the town, but the road was too wet for us to attempt it, and we returned to the ship. Some of the passengers had taken themselves off to a pretty garden which climbed a gentle slope close to us, where a band of music was playing opera airs. As far as Abo, which lies at the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia, the course from Stockholm is due east.

We left Abo at four in the morning. The navigation from thence to Helsingfors is most intricate, and too dangerous to be undertaken at night. The weather proved bright and fine, and we were early on deck, anxious to breathe the fresh air, and see all we could of the curious scenery. The boat had to thread its way through channels so narrow that one could scarcely imagine how it managed to get along. Thousands of islands were scattered about, clothed on their summits with tall dark pines, that shot up into the sky, every twig visible in the clear northern air; whilst at their base were larches and birch-trees, whose branches, like

green hair, swept into the water, and rose and fell with its motion. Some of the islands, however, were nothing but bare masses of red granite, polished by the eternal waves. Clumps of sharp, dangerous needles stood up, frightful neighbours in stormy weather. Now and then we came to a clear broad space, like a lake. Far out at sea, we could see the ships rolling, steering clear of the treacherous shore. Inland, we had glimpses of a hilly country, with deep gorges, up which ran for many a mile calm blue fiords. The whole scene was indescribably wild and beautiful, but we longed for a southern sun to gild its loveliness. We passed a delightful day.

The Gulf of Finland would probably be interesting to a geologist, for, imbedded in the red granite, were large patches of the purest white marble, which we at first imagined to be collections of sea-gulls. We were all ready for a scramble when, running under the rock on which stands the strong fortress of Sweaborg, we dropped anchor off the town of Helsingfors. This place is resorted to for sea-bathing, and presents a livelier aspect than Abo. It possesses a museum, a university, and a very fine cathedral, placed upon a commanding eminence. Here, for the first time, we saw the

Russian drosky, with the drivers in national costume, which is handsome, and, no doubt, convenient; but at first it made us smile, the men looked so like big babies. They wear large wrinkled boots (often used as pockets), half concealed by their outer garments, which consist of a coat with tight body, fur cuffs and collar, a very full skirt, gathered in at the waist, and a little round cap, bordered with fur, which completes the quaint costume. They appeared to sit upon air, for their lower robes quite concealed the driving-seat. Most of the droskies were intended for one person, and the seat behind the driver, always remarkably small, was only slightly increased in size even when intended for two. The horses were spirited little animals, with neither collars nor blinkers, and the smallest possible amount of harness, the reins being passed over a high frame, shaped like a lyre.

We landed as soon as we could, passing through crowds of people, some idlers watching the arrival of the steamer, others busy buying, selling, and talking, for a market is held along the extensive quay. Groups were squatted round big tea-pots, eating hot cakes with carraway seed, the men still wearing their sheep-skin coats, although the month was June.

We longed to drive in a drosky, but were deterred by our incapability of making a bargain, and we envied our American fellow-travellers, who had driven off in charge of their fat courier. My companion being hungry, we pushed through the throng to find a baker's shop, and soon perceived a window in which a goodly array of biscuits was exhibited. Entering this shop, we chose some, which we made signs to have put up in paper. We offered Russian money in payment, but this not being accepted, we produced Swedish coin. That also was refused, and we were somewhat roughly made to understand that they would take nothing but Finnish money. We had no idea that such a currency existed; again we made signs that we were strangers, and had nothing else. The people, however, were inexorable, and we left the shop, casting longing looks at the cakes. In another shop, where we took the precaution of tendering our money first, the result was the same, and we were tempted to agree with the great Chancellor Oxenstjern, who declared the Finlanders to be "not men, but brutes." We then returned to the ship, where we got a heap of shabby money, with "Grand-Duchy of Finland" upon it, and returned for the cakes, which proved to be excellent.

The University is a large building, and near it there are extensive pleasure-grounds, but ill-kept and flowerless. They were planted with long rows of oriental plants, apparently dwarfed by the keen sea-breezes; under them we munched our dearly-bought biscuits, and then set off to explore the town. We passed two or three green-domed, whitewashed churches, which greatly resembled mosques, the domes being of copper, painted sea-green. The streets were wide, and the wooden houses seemed comfortable. Some were built of grey granite, reminding us of the "guid toun" of Aberdeen. The "Society House" is a great staring yellow-washed building, in which we were quite glad to have escaped dining. Passengers are often obliged to land and take their meals on shore instead of on board ship. The shops were good, but we searched in vain for any in which photographs were to be got. It was quite a climb up to the Cathedral, the steep road which led to it terminating in a double flight of granite steps. The building is formed of fine white stone, and is crowned by a splendid dome of azure blue, spangled with stars, upon which is reared a great cross of burnished gold, with streaming chains, pointing to heaven, and shining like a beacon upon a hill. With some difficulty we obtained admission, but were well

rewarded for our pains. The red granite columns, each of one piece, and polished until they shone like glass, would have been superb anywhere, and the screen of gilded fret-work, adorned with ecclesiastical paintings and figures of saints, was very beautiful, the most distinguished corner being occupied by a picture of the favourite Russian Saint, St. Alexander Nevsky. Hard by was reared a Byzantine representation of the Virgin and Child, the faces and hands alone appearing out of the gold-plaqued drapery, the frame of which glittered with large brilliants. It is quite a modern cathedral, but we were delighted with its vast size and perfect proportions. We lingered long on the terrace outside, the view from which was well worth seeing; the blue sea, blended with rock and forest, dominated by the vast grey castle, made a charming scene.

We returned glowing with satisfaction to our boat, where we spent some time on deck watching the busy scene by moonlight. Boats flew along, casting deep shadows upon the water, and leaving glittering tracks behind; lights shone on shore, where the market-folks were busy with great bundles of green boughs. Our slumbers were a little interrupted during the night by the constant shipping of cargo, as well as by people walking about and talking; and day was beginning

to dawn, when a most unmelodious brass band struck up on the quay close to us. It made us think of the Christmas waits we had listened to in our childhood. At last, however, all was silence, if not darkness, and, when we awoke to consciousness, the bright sun was shining in at the cabin window, and the ship was moving slowly along close to a sandy shore. I hastened on deck, where a grand surprise awaited me.

I was in fairyland, in a fresh wood or beautiful garden. A smooth green wall of beechen boughs reached from the bulwarks to the awning, completely shutting out the water. Wreaths of flowers hung about in all directions, and bright patches of sunshine pierced the leafy screen, and danced about the deck. The whole ship was garlanded in the same manner, in honour of St. John's Day, nearly the grandest fête of the Greco-Russian Church. As the passengers came up one by one, it was amusing to see the look of astonishment with which they regarded the floating bower, and every face beamed with satisfaction.

We had shipped a number of Finlanders at Helsingfors, apparently well-to-do people, very fat, with broad, good-humoured faces, and bright black eyes. One lady was accompanied by a

pretty child and its nurse, a good-looking woman, not over-clean. There was a Finn on board who spoke a little English, and had a good deal to say as to the state of the country, which he pronounced to be prosperous, trading, as it does, in fish and grain, and rich in minerals, but they were terribly afraid, he said, of being altogether swallowed up by Russia. Like most northerners, they are a very tenacious race, and have been allowed by their "Grand-Duke"—they do not acknowledge him as their "Czar"—to retain their ancient laws and language. The use of the latter is on the increase, for all the students at the universities are now obliged to understand and attend lectures in the Finnish tongue, which nearly resembles Swedish.

As we approached the head of the gulf the scenery greatly decreased in beauty. No more islands peeped out of the water, and we ran along close to a sandy shore, skirted by monotonous forests of spruce-fir. Here and there a little fishing village cropped up, its boats drawn up on the shore, while round them children were playing, not incommoded by too many clothes. Old men and women sat mending long lines of fishing-tackle, which hung from pole to pole. At intervals we came upon tall, spectral-

looking lighthouses, and bright cottages, belonging to the coastguard, were placed on hillocks of sand, bound together by tough wire grass. But the weather was pleasant, and all the more so for the shelter afforded by our leafy walls.

It was late in the day when we entered the deep gulf which makes Viborg the best harbour in Finland. We passed two or three large steamers and a good deal of shipping as we glided up to the buoy. Before landing, my companion ran down for her pencils. The old castle, once famous in story, was a most picturesque object. Huge and square, its keep rose to a great height, and as we approached we became aware of the strength of its fortifications and ramparts. It stands upon an island, and on three sides runs a fosse flooded with water, the fourth being protected by the river and earth-works. We sat on an esplanade raised on the opposite bank while my companion sketched.

The evening was one of great beauty. It was the longest day of the year; the sun was setting in its brightest glory, leaving behind a flood of burnished gold, while the full moon was rising, like a great round ball. The effect of the mingled lights in the clear atmosphere was

truly singular. The sky was half rosy, half amber-coloured; there were traces of violet, and, to the north, streaks of green and blue, like the reflections of light in an opal. We sat talking on deck until long past midnight, and yet I could still see to read the small-printed Tauchnitz I held in my hand. It never grew darker, in fact, and before we lay down to sleep the light brightened again, and people were walking about and talking on the shore as if it were day-time. The northerners make the most of their short Summer.

In the morning we first caught sight of the Russian shore from the cabin window, and found that we had entered the broad mouth of the Neva. On each side a wide strip of land was bordered by dark lines of forest, too distant to be distinct; red-sailed pilot-boats came scudding by, and gallant ships in full sail glided quickly past. In another hour the steamer ran closer to the shore, and we saw copper-domed churches and country houses nestling amongst the woods of fir and spruce. A speck in the distance was pronounced to be Cronstadt, off which lay the fine Russian fleet. As we passed we counted six floating batteries, besides wooden ships and ironclads—noble vessels, with the double Russian eagle fluttering from their tall masts—all

looking ready for action. It must be annoying to have so little sea-board on which to exhibit the prowess of such ships. The granite fortress of Cronstadt, its arsenals, docks, barracks, and harbours, form an immense mass of buildings, swarming with life. This busy port numbers a population of fifty thousand souls. The exports of tallow, hemp, flax, vegetable oil, and hides are very large. From May to November is the favourable season; later in the year all is ice-bound, and in comparative tranquillity.

The sight of Cronstadt reminded me of a very remarkable anecdote* which I had heard. After the Crimean war, Baron Todleben was requested by the Czar to examine the state of its defences, which he found to be almost worthless; and he submitted to the Emperor a plan for their improvement, according to which a sub-marine foundation was considered necessary.† Diving-bells were lowered, in order to examine the bottom of the sea, and, lo! there was found the very substratum de-

* Related by Dr. Russell, of the *Times*, to Sir Alfred Power, K.C.B.

† The honour of having made the first attempt to sound the sea belongs to Peter the Great, who constructed an apparatus with hooks, in order to sound the Caspian, and ascertain the nature of its bottom.

manded by Todleben, laid by Peter the Great, who must have had in view the very additions proposed by the great engineer.

Cronstadt is seventeen miles from the capital. As we left it behind, all were on the watch to catch sight of the great city we had travelled so far to visit, aud it was an exciting moment when at last it flashed upon us, a long, low line glittering in the sunshine. The cupolas, the spires, and the golden roofs of St. Petersburg were seen at first as mere specks, which shone like lights in the distance; then the mighty dome of St. Isaks grew into form, the fortress church shot up its tall spire to the sky, and the noble line of white palaces, which face the stranger who approaches by water, became more and more distinct. Some time was given to admiration, and then we began to think that, with our utter ignorance of the language, our condition was rather forlorn, and we did not half like leaving the ship in which we had spent three such happy days. But my energetic companion relieved me from all responsibility when the vessel stopped by telling me to "stay where I was, and be quiet;" and off she set, got the luggage together, hailed a big-bearded fellow in a blue frock, and, before I knew where I was, I found myself seated alone

in a drosky. The big driver attempted to bargain, but found his fare so utterly weak and incapable that he gave it up with a grin, and occupied himself with his fine black horse, which was impatient to be off. A second drosky was procured for the baggage, and we started for the Hôtel de France. The vehicle gave such bounds and jumps, and the seat was so small that we had to cling to one another for safety.

We drove quickly along through several wide and handsome streets to the hotel above mentioned, where we found the small accommodation to be had so dear and dirty that we determined to try some other, and decided upon the Bellevue, as being situated upon the Nevsky Prospekt, the Regent Street of St. Petersburg. Our good-natured driver made vehement signs to induce us to take lodgings, and pointed to little squares of paper attached to different balconies. We shook our heads, however, and declined, although we had been told by Russian friends that, for people at all conversant with the language and customs of the place, these lodgings were cleaner and more comfortable than the hotels, which have the reputation of being expensive, and anything but clean.

Arrived at the Bellevue, we chose a large

sitting-room, with two handsome plate-glass windows, which looked upon the street; along with an adjoining bedroom; and never had cause to repent of our choice. Neither could we complain of the prices—we were well served in our own rooms; breakfast we chose *à la carte;* dinner was arranged for us; and our whole hotel expenses did not exceed a pound a day. Common every-day life is not dear in this capital, but for anything in the shape of luxury the prices are enormous. We were told of people who had been asked five francs for a single greengage; and we never made a day's expedition that, with the simplest of dinners, did not amount to five or six pounds.

The Nevsky Prospekt is four versts in length, nearly three miles, and down it we bravely set off to find the post-office. The general direction we were able to trace upon our French map, but the names of the streets were written up in the Russian character, which was to us as a sealed alphabet. The Bellevue was situated near the top, and, turning out of the door, we asked our way—first of a waiter, then of the porter. All we got in reply were low bows, and the word "Sluches," softly uttered, which we afterwards found to signify, "I hear and obey," a piece of courtesy at that time thrown away upon us.

We passed out into the great artery of this rich city. The Nevsky Prospekt was all ablaze with shops glittering with jewels, rizas (pictured saints set in silver and gold), Siberian stones, gaudy malachite, marbles, niello, and church-plate; strange silver ornaments and weapons from the far East, crimson robes stiff with embroidery, or patterns wrought in pearls, mitres set with brilliants, beautifully worked, and chains of gold, flat and broad, from which the clergy suspend their jewelled crosses; so large and brilliant were the latter that they sparkled in the sunshine. Then the numerous churches, the open shrines lit up by lamps of many colours, under which the foreheads of devout worshippers touched the earth in prayer, before the dusky Byzantine representations of the Virgin and Child, whose faces and hands were visible peeping through the chased plaques of precious metals, the whirl of carriages, and the clouds of pigeons. It is not easy to picture the Nevsky Prospekt, or even to count the public buildings and palaces which line the busy thoroughfare. We passed more than one bridge arching over the canals which intersect the city. It was difficult to cross them, the traffic spread over the wide street having to accommodate itself to a narrow channel.

On we went, however, until the gold-plated dome of St. Isak's (St. Isak of Dalmatia) flashed before our eyes. We spoke to a mild-looking old gentleman, who luckily understood French, and he offered to conduct us to the place we were in search of—an act of kindness which we had to repay by listening to a long interrogatory. How long had we been in Russia? Whence had we come? Where were we going? Why did we travel? What did we pay at our hotel? He thought the charges enormous (and we thought that they were so reasonable); and finally remarked, "You must be very rich ladies." A reply was unnecessary, as we had arrived before a great block of building in stone, which proved to be the post-office. Here we had a further search for the *poste-restante*, a large room, in which were two officials. One of these was sleeping on an old sack in the corner, but the other, at our request, proceeded to fumble in the pigeon-holes of an ancient bureau, from which he produced some letters, that he declared were not for us. We departed, therefore, though we were convinced that there was a whole budget stowed away in that wretched old desk. The dress of these *employés* is miserable; and they, as well as the office, were exceedingly dirty, in marked contrast to the

exterior of the building, which is exceedingly handsome.

Stretching in front was a public garden, in which we sat down to rest, and observe the gay groups of nurses and children, the delight of whose mothers seemed to be to make them like Australian butterflies. They were clad in scarlet and blue, pink and green, with tassels of silver and gold, and knots of streaming ribbons, which fluttered about most gaily in the sunshine. Most of the boys wore the national costume—kaftans, or coats of velvet, crimson silk shirts, confined at the waist by a glittering girdle, knickerbockers, dandy little top-boots, blue velvet caps, and, in many instances, a long whip, to ape the coachman. The dress is exceedingly picturesque, and must be warm and comfortable. In Winter the kaftan is lined with costly fur. The nurses were tall, massive women, with clear pale skins and blue eyes. Their attire reminded us of the Roman nurses; but the silver pins and red *ruches* worn by the latter, were here replaced by a very beautiful head-dress—a loose cap of rich velvet or satin, with a stiff diadem of the same material, standing up over the forehead, and embroidered with gold, silver, or seed pearls. It was a stately and becoming *coiffure*.

CHAPTER II.

Cathedral Church of St. Petersburg—Magnificent Interior—The Iconostas—Treasures of St. Isak's—Tartar Waiter—Scene on the Nevsky Prospekt—Russian Customs—Patron Saints—Weekly Ablutions—Servants—"Peasants"—The Hermitage—The Picture-Gallery—Paintings of the English School—The Gostennitso Bellevue—Drosky-drivers—Kazan Cathedral—The Gostinnoi Dvor, or Great Bazaar—The Vicomte de G.—Shrine of St. Alexander Nevski.

ON reaching St. Isak's, we found that we had ample time to visit the interior. The cathedral church of St. Petersburg stands in a square so large that it somewhat diminishes the effect of the palaces and public buildings which skirt three sides of its area. On the fourth it is open to the Neva, so that its splendid proportions can be seen to equal advantage on every side. Built in the usual Russian form—that of the Greek cross—it has four principal doors, and four magnificent porticoes, two of which have a

double row of columns; in other respects they are similar. Two flights of granite steps lead to their level, and are, perhaps, the most wonderful part of the whole building, each being formed from a single mass of Finland granite, brought in the block to St. Petersburg, and there cut and polished. It is difficult to conceive how blocks of such vast size could be placed on any ship or barge without sinking it. The pillars, sixty feet in height and seven in girth, are also monoliths. Nothing can exceed the exquisite polish of the stone, which is as smooth and bright as glass, and has a rosy hue, closely resembling that of the ancient Egyptian granite; the grain, however, is smaller. The Corinthian capital of the columns, the pediment, cornices, groups of figures—indeed all the ornamental work—are in a golden bronze.

Thirty granite pillars support the copper dome, which is covered with thin plates of burnished gold, on the top of which rises a smaller circle of granite columns, supporting a cupola, on which is reared a gigantic cross, also of burnished gold, with streaming chains. Elevated far above the flat-roofed blocks of the city palaces, this is seen like a light from afar, and catches the eye when distance renders

the rest of the town indistinct. There are four smaller domes, in form resembling the principal one.

Splendid as is this church, the effect is oppressive and gloomy. The gazer is mainly impressed with ideas of the enormous expense and toil with which it has been reared. The side which faces the Neva has given way slightly, and fresh piles are continually being driven in, at great expense, to strengthen the foundation. St. Isak's differs from most Russian churches in its abundant external ornamentation, but in other respects it conforms to the usual plan. Usually the centering is roofed by a bulb-shaped dome, above which rises a cross, secured by chains, and each large dome has four satellites, furnished in the same manner generally. These cupolas are richly gilt, silvered, or painted; one will be bright blue, powdered with stars; another tea-green or yellow, a deep Indian red is also a favourite colour. The walls are tinted to correspond; flesh-colour, buff, or light greens are often used, and occasionally there are frescoes over the doors. This style of building, affording no accommodation for the numerous bells of which Russians are so fond, renders necessary a bell-tower, which, being built separately, adds

greatly to the effect of the pile, and some of these towers are of great intrinsic beauty. The most striking object in the interior is the Iconostas, or screen. On it are placed pictures of saints, which are delicately painted in rich colours, the figures standing out of a golden background, exquisitely wrought in minute scrolls, and framed with infinite richness. Then there are Rizas, or Byzantine representations of the Virgin and Child, the bodies concealed by thin sheets of gold or silver, which form the drapery; sometimes the metals are used together, and formed into patterns; and occasionally the Virgin will have a crown in high relief, encrusted with stones of barbarous magnificence—diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, rubies, and pearls, many of them as large as hazel nuts, and which are generally uncut lumps of little beauty, but great value. Some of these Rizas are very ancient; the more modern shrines are frequently set with brilliants of the purest water. This strange magnificence astonishes at first, but it is curious how soon it palls upon the gazer, there being little in it really beautiful or artistic. To the members of the Greco-Russian church these screens are of vast importance, separating, as they do, the holy from the unholy. The foot of the layman must not pass

its royal gates or inferior portals. Behind them lies the sanctuary, where the priest alone may tread. In its recesses the sacred elements are consecrated, and amid clouds of incense, the strains of many voices, blended in harmony, pierce the golden fretwork, and charm the senses of the multitude who are bowing their foreheads to the earth outside. Steps of polished porphyry lead up to St. Isak's Iconastasis, which, splendid as it is, we could scarcely bring ourselves to admire, so garish does it appear even in the subdued light of this great church. The masses of gold, beautifully wrought, it is true, the pillars of lapis lazuli, the columns of malachite (iron tubes plated with the precious marbles), all in themselves beautiful, offend the eye when placed close together. The boast of St. Isak's is a diamond-set Riza of untold value; it is placed in a shrine, a superb mass of malachite, lapis lazuli, gold, and precious stones, which made our eyes ache to look at it.

When we got back to dinner we asked for some wine, but found it impossible to make our Tartar chelovek (waiter) understand. He was a small man, with lank black hair and sly, glittering eyes. The Tartars in St. Petersburg are what the Germans once were in Paris, servants

working in the hotels for lower wages, and said to be more honest than the Russians, but they are slow, and do not understand signs. We could get nothing from our waiter but the word "sluches," and fondly hoping that *sluches* meant *vin ordinaire*, we nodded our heads, but he still stood grave and immovable. At length he seemed to understand the word "Kellner," for he vanished, and returned with the German who kept the Restaurant, and at last the Burgundy arrived. We were thankful to get it, being thirsty with the heat, and having been warned against drinking the Neva water, which is very unwholesome.

The dinner was good, its only peculiarity being the little patties invariably handed with the soup. They are made of isinglass and sturgeon, mixed with a kind of brioche paste, and were not a bad accompaniment to the thin potage. There were fine sheets of plate-glass in the window, but they were so encumbered with heavy curtains and blinds, inside and out, as to make opening them troublesome, and the result was always a fit of sneezing, from the cloud of dust which arose when they were disturbed. The deep window-seats were very convenient. In them we could sit and see all that was going on in the street, and the view was most amusing.

We were opposite to one of the royal palaces, a green-washed plaster building of great extent, ornamented with redundant white scrolls in stucco, the court-yard being shaded by two or three trees; there are no private gardens in the town, and the public ones, generally speaking, are arid and poor. We could see over a considerable extent of city from our window, the town being widely spread and open. Cupolas and campaniles stood out in all directions against the clear amber sky. One large dome full in sight glittered in the light of the setting sun; it was painted ultra-marine blue, and powdered over with silver stars. This is said to be the church in which Peter the Great married his wife Catharine, and the story goes that the reluctant Patriarch was forced by the royal cudgel to perform the ceremony.

We were never tired of looking down upon the Nevsky Prospekt, it was so full of life. The men wore the Russian costume, but the women were clad in cotton dresses, probably made in Manchester, had handkerchiefs thrown over their heads, and, as far as appearance went, might have come from the same place themselves. The street was paved in the centre, but on each side ran a broad strip of wooden blocks, which were in Winter more convenient for the sledges.

At present the little droskies flew along them, such tiny, airy carriages, the spirited animals which drew them as much at liberty as possible, their long tails streaming in the wind, and the bells which ornamented them tinkling as they tossed up their well-formed heads, and expanded their thin red nostrils to catch the breeze. On the rushing stream of vehicles tears. You mark one in particular as it dashes past, when, with a sudden whirl, it is lost in the crowd; the sight is enough to make the gazer giddy. No wonder that those who were not solitary had to cling together for safety. We sat and sat until the golden light gave way to violet, which, in its turn, faded into a clear green grey. At half-past ten every object was as distinct as it had been hours before; the hue upon them had changed, but that was all.

One clear day in which to idle, to see the town in our own way, we determined to secure, by not sending our letters of introduction until the following evening; and with bright hopes of the morrow, we went to sleep for the first time under the protection of a Russian saint, who, from his lofty position in the corner of the room, looked down upon us with great tranquillity. Whether he was St. Sergius, St. Dimitri of the Don, or St. Alexander Nevsky, we had no means

of ascertaining. These pictures play a great part in the domestic economy of the country. A picture of the patron saint of the family is always hung in the principal rooms; the moment a child is born it is placed under its protection; at baptisms and churchings, in every religious ceremony, it plays a prominent part. At weddings it is taken to the church by a small boy, a little bridesman, who carries it against his breast, face outwards, and after the ceremony bears it back to its corner. The same image is placed behind the pillow which supports the head of the dying, and *in extremis* the poor are laid on a bench under the saintly picture. When the corpse is laid out, the head is turned towards it, and if the person has been married, the taper held during the ceremony is taken from a case suspended beneath the picture, and placed in the hand. On the breast of the dead a small representation of the Saviour is laid, and prayers are read over the body by professional people, male or female; the deformed of the latter sex, who are not likely to marry, often gain their living in this manner. These prayers, like all the offices of the church, are in Sclavonic, and never cease until burial takes place, the reader standing with his face towards the picture. Nor is the saint forgotten

on more ordinary occasions. A visitor entering a house salutes his picture before he notices the family; no business is undertaken, no servant engaged, or governess dismissed, without appealing to it for enlightenment and assistance. Every rich man travels with his picture, and on arriving at his destination, it is the servant's first duty to withdraw it from its case, and place it in the accustomed corner.

On getting up next morning, I threw on my dressing-gown, and, jug in hand, went in search of some one who would give me water. Two men were asleep in the passage—one on a sack in a window-seat, the other stretched on a mat. The Russians never provide rooms, or even beds, for their servants. Their place at night is the well-warmed corridor, which, with their possessions, the clothes on their backs, a shuba, or sheep-skin coat, and a large square pillow, thrown down in any corner, serves for their small ideas of comfort. As may be supposed, such servants are very dirty, never undressing, except on Saturday, when all Russia goes to the bath. It is not their custom, however, to enter the water, but after exposing their bodies to the influence of very hot vapour, they have tepid pails of it dashed upon them, and come out as red as lobsters. This ablution

serves for the entire week—they never touch brush, comb, or water for the next seven days, a shake on waking sufficing for the day's toilet.

Rousing one of the sleepers, up got a man of at least six feet. The Russian women are remarkably small—perhaps stunted by their indoors life; but the men are tall, broad-shouldered, fine fellows, with gentle manners and soft voices. We found them most obliging, but not quick—they gave us the idea of people whose intelligence was unawakened, their expression being that of big dogs with honest eyes. Pointing to my jug, I made my friend at last understand that I wanted water, and not merely a jugful, but a large quantity in a pail, was brought to me. These men do not wait at table, that office being filled by Tartars; but they polish the floors, clean the rooms, and supply them with wood and water. They are called "peasants," and one or two are always found lounging or sleeping in the passages. Their Summer dress is slight enough, consisting of a gingham shirt, generally pink, which is tucked into high wrinkled boots; and over this garment a sleeveless coat, with a full skirt, which comes down to the knee.

As soon as we had had breakfast, we set off

to find the picture-gallery, about half an hour's walk, and soon found ourselves in front of the Hermitage, which contains the Art treasures. Wide flights of steps lead to a corridor which runs round the hall, the roof of which is supported by granite columns. In the vestibule are placed fine groups of modern sculpture, and some most beautiful specimens of Siberian jaspers and marbles. There are two candelabra, at least ten feet high, made of the much-prized violet jasper, and brilliant in polish; and against the walls were splendid slabs, various in hue, supporting tazzas and vases of lapis lazuli, malachite, porphyry, and a green marble closely resembling bloodstone.

The picture-gallery is one of the finest in Europe. I was particularly anxious to visit the Spanish collection, some of the contents of which I had seen years ago at the Hague, before they were sold to Russia by the late King of Holland. St. Petersburg is particularly rich in the works of Murillo and Velasquez. Of all the eighteen pictures by the hand of the former, the one we most admired was "The Repose in Egypt." Such a lovely quiet group, resting in the shade of far-spreading trees, through which one tender ray of sunshine penetrates, and falls upon the head of the sleeping

child. How much more beautiful is this picture than that on the same subject treated by Guido, which hangs in an adjoining room. The apparition of the infant Christ is perhaps the finest conception in this collection.

Among the works of Velasquez is a duplicate of his portrait of Leo X.—the only one he painted in Rome during the two years he resided there. One large room is nearly full of Vandycks. What a pity that they should be lost to England, for the greater number were formerly in the Houghton collection. Near a fine melancholy picture of Charles I. hangs a full-length of Henrietta Maria; and there are lords and ladies, young and old, of the Pembroke and also the Wharton family. A portrait of Inigo Jones is interesting; as well as one of the wife and child of Rubens—a much more elegant picture than the same subject by Rubens himself. One picture, differing in character from the rest, had the familiar face of a friend, for we had an old, much-prized engraving of it—the "Dance of Boy Angels." I was half ashamed of not being sufficiently pleased with the Rembrandts. I think that I was disappointed with the colouring, remembering that of the "Dutch officer," the deep crimson of his sash, the flashing light on his steel armour, and the

ruddy glow on his honest face. Many of these Rembrandts were dull and cold; but there were wonderful studies of wrinkled old men and women. The collection is large, but not arranged advantageously, part being hung upon screens.

The pictures of the English school are placed in the same hall. We felt quite grateful to Russia for having an English collection. Catherine II. showed her taste by greatly admiring charming Sir Joshua Reynolds, and at her desire he painted a huge allegorical picture, for which he received 1500 guineas. (Vandyck only got £25 from Henrietta Maria for one of his finest portraits of Charles I.) This acre of canvas is the first English picture which strikes the eye. It represents the infant Hercules strangling the serpents—the young god representing Russia, the serpents her enemies. The muscles displayed in the struggle are enormous, and the flesh so red that one's first inclination is to ask—was there ever anything so ugly? The portraits were the most interesting part of this collection.

Our morning's work finished, we left the exhibition, and seeing a tempting drosky in the distance, we hailed it, and boldly ordered the driver to take us to the Gostinnitso, Bellevue,

Nevsky Prospekt. Bounding up and down, we flew along, clinging to each other for safety; scattering great flocks of pigeons, which rose up like showers of spray, and as we dashed through them, enveloped us in a cloud of whirring wings. These birds are well cared for by public as well as private charity. No orthodox Russian would harm one for the world; they are tamed birds, emblems of the Holy Ghost, protected by the Church, and in the busiest thoroughfares they live in peace.* Arrived at the end of our journey, we found considerable difficulty in paying the fare, there being no fixed price for these carriages, and it is not customary to arrange such matters at the hotels. It is, however, amusing enough to watch the bargaining which goes on respecting them.

The Isvostchiks, or drosky-drivers, a remarkably merry set, lounge about in groups, talking and laughing. All of a sudden there is a rush, caused by the appearance of a customer, who is

* It is generally supposed that pigeons are considered holy, because a pigeon has come to be the emblem of the Holy Ghost; but to the old Sclavonians also this bird was sacred. They believed that for six weeks after death the soul of the deceased, under such a form, came to eat and to drink, and to watch the behaviour of the mourners.

immediately surrounded, and a bargain is struck, amidst general chattering and joking. Some time ago government tried the effect of a tariff, but the people so much disliked the idea that it had to be given up.

After a short rest, we set off to visit the Kazan Cathedral, which stands in the Nevsky Prospekt, not far from our hotel. It takes rank next to St. Isaks, and is a kind of miniature St. Peter's. The screen, as well as the massive balustrades, are of pure silver, the latter, which are exceedingly handsome, being an offering from the Don Cossacks, after the campaign of 1812. A sprinkling of devout people were kneeling on the polished floor, bowing their foreheads down to the cold marble, and praying before the miraculous image of the Virgin, brought from Kazan, in the fourteenth century —a very dusky lady, but the jewels with which she is decorated are said to be worth fifteen thousand pounds. In the centre of the crown there shines an almost priceless sapphire, a beautiful stone of the richest hue. The church itself, which is erected upon piles, the foundations alone costing a vast sum, contains some fine porphyry and Finnish granite. With the exception of the coffined saints, no monuments are allowed in Russian churches. At a short

distance from the Kazan Cathedral, stands a very picturesque object, the Riza, an open shrine, glittering with gold and silver, and before which coloured lamps burn night and day. Near at hand stands a priest in embroidered robes, with plate in hand, who bows his head to receive the copeks of the worshippers, who interrupt for a moment the busy day's routine to utter a prayer or beg a blessing upon some undertaking.

Our way home led past the Gostinnoi Dvor, or great bazaar, a vast collection of shops under arcades. A most amusing place it proved to be. Streams of people flowed along the busy passages, an endless procession, some making purchases, others, loungers like ourselves, stopping to look at the glittering array of goods exhibited—gilded shrines, niello, wood-carving, curious coffers, costly silks, and tissues for vestments, church furniture, and a thousand pretty as well as useful things. A most tempting display of fine fruit was carried about on trays, and sold in the streets. Most grateful would some of it have been to us after the salt diet which we had lately lived upon; but we never could make up our minds to buy any, it was so pulled about by the vendors, each cherry, strawberry, or gooseberry being sepa-

rately polished with a bit of rag, or arranged by fingers so dirty that all the water in the Neva could not have washed them clean. We had been told, also, such histories of the fabulous prices demanded in the same fruit-shops as deterred us from attempting to buy any.

In the evening we set off to visit our American travelling-companions, whom we found at the Hôtel de France, in the little Morskoi Prospekt, a dull street, with a boatless canal running through it. The little girl's face beamed when she caught sight of us, and she was delighted to get the supply of books we had brought. The trio were sitting, a gloomy party, in a great forlorn room on the ground-floor, overlooking the dingy canal. They complained that the food was bad and dear; their rooms alone were forty francs a day, and at the Bellevue, with all the amusement of the situation, and our *soignés* meals, we were paying less than six-and-twenty francs a day—the result of having no courier. We had a pleasant chat, and were glad to compare notes with our friends, who were very intelligent people. They were going to Moscow in a few days, and had just engaged an additional courier, the one they had with them being utterly useless, as he neither spoke nor understood a word of Russ. They were charm-

ed with St. Petersburg, and pronounced the Nevsky Prospekt to be like Broadway. We took leave, promising to return before their departure, and on reaching the Bellevue we despatched our letter of introduction to the French Embassy, after which we went to rest with good consciences.

We were hurrying our breakfast next morning, with the intention of returning to the picture-gallery, when the door flew open, Monsieur le Vicomte de G—— was announced, and in walked a small man, with sharp, well-cut features, bright black eyes, a sallow complexion, and a close-cropped head, and, oh! horror, my companion looked as if she had been turned out of a band-box, but unfortunately I was in my *camisole*. Remembering, however, that it was the *camisole* trimmed with real Valenciennes, I was restored to composure, feeling at the same time that I was undergoing a strict scrutiny, under the Parisian eye of Monsieur, who would discover in a moment whether my morning costume had emanated from a *premier* in the Rue de la Paix, or had been bought cheap at the "Gagne Petit." We had a little conversation relating to mutually intimate friends, when he proceeded to question us as to what we had seen, and evidently came to the conclusion that

we were very slow people for lingering over objects in which we were interested. instead of being hurried through half-a-dozen places in an afternoon.

"Ladies," said the Vicomte, "you must have a *commissionnaire* who speaks Russian and French, and a carriage. If you will allow me to ring the bell, I will order both, and accompany you this afternoon to the shrine of St. Alexander Nevsky."

A few words in Russ, and the matter was settled. We were in for a regular round of sight-seeing, and obliged to be grateful for being taken in tow; for St. Petersburg is a difficult place for strangers, many of its sights requiring orders, which are not always to be easily procured, and no *custode* speaking anything but his own language. These arrangements concluded, Monsieur le Vicomte de G—— bowed himself out backwards, and, clasping his hat to his breast, vanished, saying in a sharp, decided tone,

"*Au revoir*, ladies, you will have the *complaisance* to call for me at the French Embassy at two o'clock precisely."

The shrine we were about to visit, that of St. Alexander Nevsky, is one of the most celebrated, and certainly the most costly, in all

Russia. As Alexander, Prince of Novgorod, he obtained a great victory, in the thirteenth century, over the King of Sweden, on the left bank of the Neva, near where the waters fall into the Gulf of Finland, and, according to custom, he was named after the place of his victory. He is said to have been handsome and courageous, but, like the men of his day, cruel. He was in the habit, after his victories, of tying his victims to the tails of his horses. The warrior took the vows and habit of a monk, under the name of Alexis. His decease was notified (it is said) to the Patriarch by a voice from heaven, and, while the body lay in the coffin, the dead man opened one of his hands as the prayer of absolution was spoken by the officiating priest. This, and other miracles, obtained for Alexander the most important niche amongst Russian saints. Peter the Great founded the monastery in which he is now buried, and brought the body to it from Vladimir by water, the Czar himself steering the vessel which bore the sainted relics. The monastery itself is one of the most important in Russia, being the residence of the Patriarch or Metropolitan. His power was first established in 1587, but put an end to by Peter the Great, who declared "that in his dominions he would have no second Pope." The affairs of the church

were then governed by the Holy Synod, as they still are (although the office of Patriarch was nominally restored), subject to the will of the sovereign, who is supreme head of the Church. When a vacancy occurs in a Bishopric, the Emperor does not always regard the choice of the Synod. When it meets, a small triangular mirror is placed on the table; it is called the mirror of conscience, and represents the Imperial presence.

CHAPTER III.

The Russian Clergy—Ecclesiastical Academies—Our Guide—The French Embassy—Breaking the Ice on the Neva—The Ploschad, or Great Square—The Cemetery—Fêtes des Morts—Pleasure Grounds—Quays of St. Petersburg—National Foundling Hospitals—Troitski Bridge—Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul—Drosky-Sledges—Summer-Palace Gardens—Islands—The Great and Little Neva—Basil's Island—Tsarskoé Sélo.

THE clergy in this country are wholly abstracted from the affairs of the state, and each member at his ordination takes a solemn oath to that effect. The revenue of the Metropolitan is eight hundred pounds per annum; an archbishop has six hundred, a bishop five. Besides the Patriarch, there are four Metropolitans, three Archbishops, and twenty Bishops; the higher Church preferment is held by the monastic or regular clergy, who cannot marry. They are seldom men of birth, a noble never

entering into holy orders, but many of them are learned and rich. They wear robes of black, and over them floats their long hair, which is never cut. It is parted behind, and turned over the shoulders, to mingle with the long, flowing beard.

The secular clergy are a very different class of men—coarse, dirty, and in condition little above the peasants with whom they associate (the Russian peasant may be a respectable farmer). One may occasionally be chosen by a nobleman to reside in his family as chaplain, but they never mix with the family, taking their meals with the footmen. Still some of them are learned in books; for the son of a parish priest, being obliged (formerly) to follow his father's calling, unless he could obtain a licence to follow some other, was forced to enter one of the many training colleges. There are four principal ecclesiastical academies—namely, at Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kief, and Kazan. The youth, after becoming a student, officiates first as reader, then as deacon, and lastly as proto-presbyter, the highest office to which a secular priest can attain. The secular priest must be married—he cannot be ordained by the Bishop if single—but he is not allowed to marry a second time; and a widower may continue his office. The candi-

date for a "place," or priestly office, must apply to the consistory, who consider it their right to apportion to him a wife along with the place. Lists of ladies for allotment are kept, and many an unfortunate youth is obliged to marry the elderly daughter of some defunct priest, or pope, as they are called in country places. Mothers often petition the consistory to obtain husbands for their girls, in spite of which there are many "Christ's Brides" in Russia.

The pope is often a good, fatherly man, an active member of his household, taking long journeys on foot to buy stores and articles of clothing, a stock of shoes, and such like things being laid in once a year, at the time of the great fairs. In his parish the pope is treated with respect, but is too poor to obtain much influence. The less respectable of their class live much with the peasantry, and drink hard. A portion of land is alloted to the priest, deacon, and four sacristans; the first has half, as well as fees and presents, and a small pension is given to the widow. This was the narrow system preserved until altered by an Imperial ukase which placed things upon a slightly more liberal footing. It is no longer compulsory for a son to follow his father's calling, and the sons of priests now rank as those of nobles.

Were it not for their extreme dirt, the appearance of the secular clergy would be imposing. They are generally fine-looking men, tall and stout; their robes are coloured according to individual tastes; they may wear anything, but black, green, and purple are favourite colours. Their hair is oily and long, straggling over their shoulders, slightly *crêpé*, in consequence of being plaited in tails for home toilette, and their beards are untidy, presenting a considerable contrast to those of their monastic brethren. The upper robe is fashioned like a dressing-gown, confined at the waist by a scarf. Underneath is worn a light garment of black stuff, the home-garment, which often shines with grease, and emits a smell like that of an expiring lamp. In Winter a high fur-cap is worn, and in Summer a broad-brimmed, napless hat, and they carry long sticks, and look like grotesque unclean beadles. Their church robes, however, are both handsome and clean.

We had just finished adorning ourselves, preparatory to a second interview with our magnificent friend, when the *commissionnaire* entered —"Louis Blanc," a Swiss, as we at once perceived, from his hard features and, if one may so express it, colourless blue eyes. He was said to be an excellent guide, and we agreed to pay

him nine francs a day; a high charge, but he was worth it. Our carriage, which was large and comfortable, with good horses, cost much what it would have done in Paris or London. We drove down the Nevsky Prospekt, and had an opportunity of seeing the Admiralty, a building half a mile in length, and wide in proportion, ornamented with statues, frescoes, and a high gilded spire.

The French Embassy, a massive square building, Italian in style, with four stories, and a flat roof, is one of the many palaces which adorn the English or Court Quay, certainly the finest quay in the world. On it are also situated the Royal residences, and those of the principal nobility; as well as many of the public offices. Some of these truly magnificent blocks are tinted green, buff, flesh colour, even red. They are ornamented in stucco arabesques, and patterns picked out in white, the good taste of which might be doubtful on smaller buildings. Here the size carries everything before it—nothing can be garish which is on so large a scale; and the warm hues must delight the eye in Winter, and contrast favourably with the sterner architecture of the granite-built Winter Palace and Hermitage.

For nearly four miles do these buildings skirt the wide road which separates them from the river, itself a sight to see, covered as it is by strange craft, and crossed by handsome bridges. It was strange to think that the very ground on which these palaces are reared was only reconquered from the Swedes in 1702, and that it was at that time a pestilential spot, covered with brushwood. Peter the Great never allowed a bridge to be built over the Neva, thinking thereby to accustom his subjects to boating; and many were the consequent disasters, for the river is often dangerously rough, and utterly unfit for any boats, save those which are much larger than any his arsenal then contained. Even now, when the ice is breaking up, its rushing stream threatens the safety of the town; and no one acquainted with St. Petersburg would be surprised to hear of some overwhelming disaster. A slender spire, covered with plates of burnished gold, a beautiful object, is seen on the opposite shore. It shoots high up into the sky, flashing in the sunshine. It belongs to the fortress cathedral, the Royal place of interment, which we have to visit later in the day.

Monsieur de G—— spoke of the breaking up of the ice on the Neva as one of the great

public events of the year. Large masses of ice begin to float down the thawing stream, from Lake Ladoga, the source of the Neva. As soon as the river is free from these icebergs, the governor of the fortress presents a goblet of the water to the Czar, who drinks it off, to the health of "his dear citizens of the capital." Another ceremony takes place on the 18th January, when the Czar goes in state to bless the waters of the Neva; but the scene of the greatest animation which the river presents is in "butter week," so called from the great quantities of rich cakes then eaten. Although the Russian Church does not recognise a carnival, the week which ushers in Lent is devoted to merry-making, and during that time a fair is held upon the frozen water, which is often solid to the depth of two yards. The people resort to the Neva in their holiday costumes, and play at various games—among others, building ice-mountains, from the summit of which they delight to slip down—a truly national amusement. The gay dresses, the booths ornamented with streaming ribbons, flags, and gaudy toys, the glittering ice-mountains, the stands of costumed musicians, and the dancing crowd, are said to produce a most beautiful effect when lit up at night by bonfires and

torches of blazing pine-wood. The mazurkas go merrily on, and set figures of the most intricate description are gone through by parties of skaters.

Pursuing our way, we turned into the Ploschad, or great square, the extent of which is quite an English square mile. St. Isak's Church is in the middle of it. It is ornamented by statues and obelisks, and bordered by palaces, one of the largest of which belongs to the Arch-Duke. On our expedition to the post-office, we had passed in this direction, and been puzzled as to the use of certain iron kiosks scattered about in front of the buildings. We learned that they were erected for the benefit of the servants, who, while waiting for their masters, gather round them at night, when they contain blazing stacks of wood. Without this artificial warmth, it would be impossible for either horses or domestics to survive the extreme cold of a night spent *al fresco* in St. Petersburg. We found that once away from the three or four principal Prospekts which radiate from this centre, the thoroughfares are very quiet, presenting a somewhat suburban aspect. The streets are wide and irregular, large and small houses jostling one another, side by side; some rising to the height of six stories, while

others are not more than a couple. They are also rather dilapidated in appearance, the patterns and stucco ornamentation being so affected by the frost as to require more care than is always bestowed upon it.

A stately avenue leads to the Nevsky Monastery. The church was originally erected in wood, but rebuilt in stone by Catherine II. It is one of the largest in the city. The shrine is very magnificent, being made of pure silver, as many as 3,500 pounds weight of which metal were employed upon it. It is about fifteen feet high, with bassi-rilievi, which represent the most celebrated scenes in the life of the sainted warrior. On each side an angel trumpets forth his heroic deeds. On the monument are suspended the keys of Adrianople. The church itself is lofty and handsome. It contains many copies of sacred subjects from the old masters, and some beautiful modern representations of saints, probably painted in the monastery itself, as most of these vast establishments have an atelier for the purpose. Some specimens of Siberian jaspers and marbles are finer than any to be seen in St. Isaks. The Iconostas is, like the principal shrine, in pure silver, which is wrought into massive scrolls. *Eikons* of peculiar richness were suspended from it,

plaqued with gold, and studded with very large pearls, for which this monastery is famous, and they were shown off to advantage in the mellow light thrown upon them by coloured lamps and waxen tapers. Regarding light as typical of the life of the soul, the Russian Church is profuse in its use; hence the numerous candles and lustres in all sacred places. There are two portraits in this church which are interesting, being taken from life. One is that of Peter the Great, the other of Catherine II. The gigantic figure and flat face of Peter shows the bumping forehead and slight cast in the eye, occasioned by fits in his childhood. As for Catherine II., she looks the incarnation of good health, good temper, and strong will. Before we left the sacristan produced a copy of the Scriptures, with a jewelled cover, which is a marvel of brilliancy. Sapphires of the brightest blue form the great cross in the centre, the patterns around being traced in brilliants of the purest water.

We passed from the cathedral to the cemetery. Most of the monuments were in pure white marble, for no common dust lies under them, great sums being paid for the privilege of resting near the most venerated of Russian saints. The coffins, we were told, are mere wooden chests, not even fastened down until

the burial service is concluded, when the lid is secured at the side of the grave by a couple of wooden pegs. This enlightened us as to the state of the vaults, which had surprised us so much at Abo. Priests in Russia are buried in full canonicals, with a book of the gospels in their right hand, and the face is covered with the silk napkin used for the sacramental cup. This cemetery is beautiful as well as interesting; flowers blossomed in profusion, and the birds sang gaily. There are two Fêtes des Morts in this country—the Tuesday week after Easter-day, and the Saturday after Ascension Day. The latter is called "The Parents' Day." Monsieur de G—— mentioned the curious way in which announcements of death are expressed. The deceased, beginning with his name, "desires his compliments to you, and wishes you may live long;" then come the dates, and mention of time of burial.

Had we been alone, we should have lingered long in this spot. As it was, we were wafted off in no time to see a pleasure-ground in the neighbourhood, and the exterior of a palace, now a place of education for officers' daughters, but originally built by Catherine III., and given to one of her favourites; its name we cannot recall. The trees were shady, but the long

rank grass was full of weeds, and the ponds were dirty. In Winter these sheets of water are used for skating; there were no flowers, and although the Summer foliage in Russia is luxuriant until spoiled by dust, the hue is sombre and monotonous, with none of the varied tints to be found in damper climates, and out-of-door gardening is in towns almost confined to cemeteries. It was quite a relief to the eye to see the children flitting about so brightly clad, one little mite having a scarlet frock trimmed with gold lace, a little muslin apron, and a pair of lace mittens. We were glad, on one account, to have seen this uninteresting pleasure-ground; it showed how valuable any vegetation is to Russian eyes. As for Monsieur de G——, his seven years' exile had taught him to appreciate what he would have scorned, had it been in the environs of Paris.

"And now," said Monsieur de G——, "I will show you what few strangers take the trouble to visit—the quays where the merchandise is landed from barges, which bring it from the White Sea, the Baltic, Siberia, the Caspian, and the Black Sea. Russia is a complete network of water-navigation, the only two large rivers which are not united, and that in spite of many attempts, being the Volga and the Don."

These quays were certainly very curious. Many of the barges contained quite a small population, and were, besides, piled with wood, hay, and bales, so packed as to leave lanes between the walls they formed. These would contain tons of dried fish, caviare, oil, tallow, hides, corn, hemp, flax, and other commodities in vast quantities, waiting to be shipped to foreign countries.

Our friend proceeded to give us a description of the markets, which in Winter present a wonderful scene; but at this period they were quite empty. As soon as a thorough frost sets in, there is a national slaughter of beasts and birds of every description, which are piled up in stacks, reaching to the roof of the sheds prepared for them. They begin to fill in October, and in ordinary years last fresh until the ice begins to give in the following Spring. The meat is excellent, if cooked directly it is thawed; but if left for the shortest time in that state, without being heated, it becomes putrid. What a sight these markets must present!—more especially as there are numbers of wild animals and strange birds; and, in addition, heaps of frozen fishes and fruits—among the latter a peculiar sort of apple, which is said to resemble pine-apple ice.

We heard a great number of amusing anecdotes touching upon the peculiarities of the people. Monsieur did not appear to like the Russians or their habits; but when does a Parisian approve of anything out of Paris? He warned us solemnly not to leave our money or keys about, the servants being proverbial for their love of pilfering; and we promised accordingly to keep everything under lock and key, though we found the process a very troublesome one.

The national foundling hospitals are upon a large scale; but we declined visiting the one in St. Petersburg, which is small when compared with that at Moscow, which extends its operations over a much larger district. Monsieur was one day rambling over the former establishment, when, by mistake (or curiosity), he entered a room which presented a strange sight. At the end was a stack, composed of the naked bodies of a couple of hundred babies, packed like sardines, biding their time for interment in Spring, it being difficult and expensive to break the ground in Winter, at which season the mortality amongst infants is great. The children of the richer classes are never allowed to be taken out for a whole year after they are born.

Driving along the upper part of the quay,

which was new to us, we passed the British Embassy, and for the first time crossed the Troitski, or Trinity Bridge—a bridge of boats, which stretches across the widest part of the river. The water was covered with boats and barges, which, taking advantage of the breeze that ruffled the stream, were hurrying on to Cronstadt, where their cargoes would be re-shipped for other countries. It was an animated scene, and the view was magnificent. No other city can boast of such a *coup d'œil* as is presented by the line of palaces we were leaving behind us. Reaching the left hand of the Neva, we were at once in the nucleus of the primitive wooden town. The houses are small, painted in dark reds and greens; and some of them are very old. The tiny church, built by Peter, looked as if it had been turned out of a Dutch toy-box; and yet it is the simple, countrified antetype of all the grand churches in St. Petersburg. The cottage inhabited by the Czar still exists, and is preserved with great care. Guards were keeping the door, and would not allow us to enter, the proper hours of admission being past. We were therefore content with the outside view, and not very curious about the interior, which is not altogether in its original state; added to which we were acquainted with

the companion cabin at Saardam, which remains just as it was left by the great Czar.

Another bridge—a drawbridge this time—and we entered the gloomy precincts of the fortress. A thrill shot through us as we thought of the dark, hopeless dungeons it contained, and of the sore hearts which had ceased to beat in them. What a time of horror must that have been which Peter spent with his unfortunate son in the torture-chamber! It matters little to the world now how Alexis died—anyway, the closing scene must have been terrible! It is only when close to the spire, which forms so beautiful an object when seen from the opposite shore, that its real height can be properly estimated. It terminates in an angel bearing a cross, and rises twenty-six feet higher than the cross upon the dome of St. Paul's. It is formed of copper plates, placed on an iron skeleton, and twenty-two pounds of pure gold were employed in gilding it.

The cathedral, which is dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, was built by an Italian architect, bound, however, to preserve the usual form of the Greek cross. It is a handsome building, and full of interesting objects. Since the foundation of the city, it has been the burying place of all the Russian sovereigns, with one excep-

tion—that of Peter II., who met his fate in Moscow, and is buried there. The Royal bodies are placed under the floor, and over each there is a sarcophagus of highly-polished white marble, without fleck or stain, pure as the driven snow, the only ornament being one large Greek cross of purest gold. Nothing can surpass the grand simplicity of these tombs, the perfect taste of which filled us with admiration. That which covers the body of Peter the Great is larger by a foot than any of the others. To a pillar close by is affixed a gold-plated image of Peter, on the frame of which is engraved the Czar's size when born. The inscription tells us that he was nineteen and a half inches in length, and five and a quarter in breadth. These measurements are not unusual records of Royalty. We mused long over the tomb of Catherine II. It was difficult to realize the fact that one once so full of life and energy should be lying dust and ashes under the marble, her spirit gone to account for the way in which she had spent her busy, restless life.

The feelings with which we regarded the last resting-place of the late Tsarevitch were very different. The marble was garlanded with roses, whilst young palms, and other tropical plants, were ranged among a rich vegetation of

cool velvety leaves, as if seeking, by their beauty, to rob death of its terrors. Numbers of curious relics were hung around—wedding-rings, the keys of fortresses and towns, foreign conquests; and the walls were concealed by warlike trophies, flags, and tattered banners, telling of many a well-contested field. As we drove away, Monsieur pointed out the position of the State dungeons, but no one is allowed to visit either them or the fortifications.

Feeling that we had done a good day's work, we conveyed our friend back to the Court Quay, promising to be ready at eight o'clock, when he was to accompany us to "The Point," the evening rendezvous of Russian fashion. Punctual to the moment arrived Monsieur, but before getting into our carriage we paused to look at his drosky; such a neat turn-out, the seat just large enough for one person, not an inch to spare. The fine black horse was champing his bit, impatient to be off. In Winter, we were told that the wheels were taken off, and the vehicle converted into a sledge, when the drosky-driver had to remain in a standing position, keeping first one leg and then the other in a bag of hay. Our friend described the Winter weather as something fearful, much colder in the capital than in the interior, where, although

the cold is severe, the air is clear and bright. In St. Petersburg it is perpetually thawing a little, and heavy fogs come driving up the gulf, rendering the three or four hours of faint daylight still more obscure, hiding the sun, which for a short time skirts the horizon, soon to disappear, and leave behind another twenty hours of darkness.

Islands are formed by the river, which, whilst passing through the town, breaks into four wide forks, with separate ramifications. The Great Neva runs straight, and from it diverges the Little Neva, the Great Nevka and the Little Nevka forming a watery network, and enclosing many islands. "The Point" is situated on one of the less considerable, called Zelagin Island, which lies about five versts (three miles and three-quarters) from the centre of the town. Our way lay over the bridge of boats, and leaving the fortress island to our left, we passed through a long suburb of dull, respectable houses, called the Kamennoi Ostrofski Prospekt, and then crossed a tiny stream into Aptekarski, or Apothecaries Island. Passing the Botanical Gardens, the hot-houses of which are extensive, and contain a fine collection of the palm and fern tribes, and of orchideous plants, a long rustic bridge led thence into

the Island of Kamennoi, or the Stones, a barren spot, as its name indicates; and from thence again we passed into the Island of Zelagin, in which the Czar has a Summer Palace, arranged in the English style. The shrubberies and gardens are well kept, with plenty of flowers; but the pride of the place is the grass, which is as fine as the velvet turf of a Richmond villa, an unusual sight in a country where dew seldom falls, and in which the Summer vegetation is so soon spoiled by dust.

But these grounds, scarcely yet reclaimed from the marsh, are exceedingly damp, and only habitable during the very hot months, when the citizens flock out of town, and ruralize in the numerous cottages which peep out of the thick woods; charming little abodes, Swiss châlets, and log huts, beautifully ornamented with carved wood-work, in which art the Russians excel, and have a style of their own. There were thatched cottages, which might have been wafted over the seas from some Devonshire lane, and more pretentious villas, surrounded by gardens. Monsieur de G—— pointed out a house standing in a forest of tall pines, in which he and a companion had passed the previous Summer. Most of the wood was oak, but there were sombre patches of dark firs,

here a bit of gorse, there a tuft of heather, and a fragrant smell of turpentine, which brought on its breath memories of many a mountain scramble in other lands. Driving along these cool green glades was exceedingly refreshing, both to body and mind, after the heat and excitement of the day. With little exception, nature reigned supreme over forest and scrub, until at last we emerged from the leafy shade, and found ourselves on a tongue of land which ran sharply into the sea. There numbers of equestrians and well-appointed equipages were moving about, and some of the horses were fine animals. There was plenty of conversation going on, and everyone seemed to enjoy the quiet evening hour, but we did not see much that was admirable, either in beauty or toilet, and looked in vain for the fair-haired, blue-eyed beauties to be met with in Paris. One lady, muffled in crimson shawl and lace mantilla, was very handsome, but her rich complexion and black eyes showed evidently that she was Spanish.

A narrow strip of water alone separated us from the Finnish shore, which was fringed with houses, public gardens of the Cremorne order, and an establishment for the sale of mineral waters, which is popular. We lingered until one by

one the carriages drove off, when, at last, finding that the chill damp was creeping on, we reluctantly gave the order, "home." We were able to return by a different road, part of which lay along the shore of the Little Neva, a broad, rolling stream, with verdant banks, laid out in lawns and gardens, attached to picturesque wooden houses, with verandahs and balconies covered with creepers. Occasionally, too, we came to large mansions ornamented with stucco, which Louis informed us belonged to rich tradespeople, a class much looked down upon by the nobles. There is no country in Europe where such a strict line of demarcation is drawn between different classes as in Russia, for, unless through a military career, a man of humble birth seldom rises, by the aid of talent or money, into a higher grade of society.

We crossed the Little Neva by the Tutchkoff Bridge, into the Vassili Ostroff, or Basil's Island. This island was given by Peter the Great to his youthful companion, "the pastrycook's boy," afterwards Prince Menzikoff, who inhabited it, and peopled it with his retainers; and at present a considerable part of the town stands upon it. It is not a fashionable quarter, but it contains wide Prospekts, bordered by good houses, as well as some important public

buildings, amongst which are the Exchange and the University. Formerly the nobles did not patronise this place of education, but lately it has received a sprinkling of sprigs of quality, amongst whom education is very deficient, notwithstanding the numerous military schools which exist, and a large establishment for the Czar's pages (whose name is legion), but the entrance to the latter is confined to noblemen's sons. Boys, however, are generally brought up at home by a tutor, whose instructions they share along with their sisters. The latter appear to profit most thereby, for the ladies in Russia are much better educated and more polished in manner than the gentlemen, who are somewhat rough. The habit of placing foreign *bonnes* about young children, no doubt facilitates their acquaintance with other languages, still they must also possess a natural disposition for their acquirement. A very curious document written by Vladimir II., who married Gytha, the daughter of our own Harold, says on this point, that, without having quitted his palace, his father spoke five languages! He speaks also of his own proficiency, as well as that of those around him—"A thing," he says, "which wins for us the admiration of foreigners."

Proceeding on our drive, we crossed the Great Neva by the Nicholas Bridge, which is built of granite and iron, and handsomely ornamented with statues. It connects the Vassili Ostroff with the English Quay, a continuation of the Court Quay; and from it we obtained a most beautiful view of the city, every dome, campanile, and spire standing sharply out against the clear green sky, which would have looked almost cold had there not been a certain glow left by the lingering sunset.

Finding that in Summer there was no service at the English Embassy on Sundays, we spent the next morning (Sunday) quietly at home; and having for the afternoon arranged an excursion to Tsarskoé Sélo,* one of the Royal Palaces, where Monsieur de G—— was to meet us later in the day, we set off, attended by Louis, to the railway-station. It was half an hour's drive thither through dull streets, and when we reached the terminus we had a short time to wait, which we employed in looking about us, expecting to see something new or strange. But no; Russian stations, allowing for a little want of comfort, are just like all other stations. Ladies' room there were none, and all

* The Duke of Edinburgh and his bride spent some days at the Palace of Tsarskoé.

classes assembled in a long stone hall with wooden benches on each side. The Palace we were about to visit is the Hampton Court of St. Petersburg, and near it are public gardens, in which there is music. The day being a holiday, there was no lack of people, mostly of the shop-keeping class (it was too early in the day for the fashionables.) Take them all in all, they were remarkably like pale, unhealthy English people, except that the men were considerably taller. Most of them wore the national costume, the frock-coat full and long, round the waist a red sash, and gaping, red-topped boots.

Anxious to see the surrounding country, we were glad to be off. The carriages flew along a perfectly flat plain, with occasional woods and clumps of fir and pine, the ground presenting the appearance of having been recently cleared of the mass of forest and scrub which covers this part of Russia for hundreds of miles. The villages were exceedingly picturesque. All the wooden houses we had previously seen were formed merely of painted planks; but these were constructed of great round pine logs, retaining the bark, placed horizontally, and intersecting one another at the angle, the chinks being stopped with moss

and fern. They looked warm and comfortable, and were arranged in rows facing each other, with a space left between each, a position in which they were placed for fear of fire. There were also curious wooden churches, with copper-covered cupolas or spires, and yellow-washed walls. Pretty country-houses were dotted about; and we passed a charming château, which Louis told us belonged to some admiral. It was painted black and white, resembling an old Cheshire house. It was sheltered by fine firs, out of which peeped a green-headed church and several log huts with gardens. We could not but admit that the Admiral had made himself exceedingly comfortable.

An hour and a quarter brought us to our destination, where Louis secured an open carriage, and we at once drove into the thick woods which surround the château. The present Royal family reside part of each Summer in this palace; but it derives its real interest from having been the favourite residence of Catherine II. Built originally by the Empress Elizabeth, it was greatly altered and ornamented by Catherine. The exterior presents an aspect of great comfort: the long two-storied house is almost homely in appearance, but in the time of the last-mentioned sovereign the high copper

roof and cupola were ornamented with thin plates of burnished gold, and the models of antique statues which adorned the *façade* and terrace were also covered with the same rich metal. The gold employed is said to have cost a million of ducats. It still remains flashing on the cupola, but much of it was removed in a fit of caprice, and the story goes that when a company of Jews wished to purchase it for a large sum, the Empress indignantly replied, that "she was not in the habit of selling her old *chiffons!*" The roof is now tea-green—a most harmonious colour, and the front of the palace, which is built of wood and plaster, is marked partly buff and partly light green, a variety of stucco ornaments, picked out in white, spreading over it. The mixture of hues is extraordinary, but the result is pleasant and cheerful. A servant in scarlet and gold (the imperial livery) conducted us by a wide flight of marble steps to the chapel, which is lofty, and richly ornamented with gold upon some dark wood; a gallery facing the screen is used by the Czar, and can be entered from the private apartments.

We passed thence through some very pretty rooms, with walls of white scagliola and hangings of crimson satin. In this suite we were

chiefly attracted by the stoves, which reached from the floor to the ceiling, in the shape of pyramids, each occupying nearly one side of a room. They were faced with curious old Dutch tiles, white and blue, with groups of shepherdesses, quaint landscapes, and animals; they are on the usual national plan, and fed from the corridor behind. Twice every day a large quantity of wood is stacked in them, the tiles retaining the warmth for a long time. The stoves are perforated, in order to allow the hot air to pass through into the chamber. They project little, being, in fact, formed between a double wall.

The bedroom of the Empress Catherine is the first chamber of historical interest. It is a lofty room, with blue glass pillars down the middle, and is in a manner divided lengthwise by a slight wooden partition, some eight feet in height, behind which, in semi-obscurity, is placed the bed. This arrangement is also a usual fashion, the servants remaining outside. In this instance a small corridor ran at the back, an unusual luxury in old houses, where generally all the rooms were thoroughfares. In Catherine's journal (which, however, is probably a forgery), she refers to the discomfort of a couple of months passed in Moscow, during

which her attendants, ladies and waiting-maids to the number of seventeen, were obliged to sleep and live in a room out of which they could not pass without crossing the chamber of their mistress. Some of the arrangements made on this occasion are almost incredible, they are so barbarous. At length these unfortunate people grew so ill that they had to appeal to the Empress Elizabeth. Her remedy was to cut off a piece of the room, form a passage, and lower a window to the ground, out of which the ladies might pass into the garden, and this in the middle of a severe Winter. The stone in Catherine's chamber is of white pottery (probably delf-ware), prettily embossed with patterns, and the floor is a mosaic of different woods, put together with much taste. The yellow saloon, which is the pride of the palace, is very lofty, and the walls are entirely incrusted with amber, large pieces, too precious to be smoothed, jutting out, all carved with different devices—the royal cypher, "E" (for Ekatarine), and the arms of the great Frederick, the donor of this costly material. There are also groups of figures sculptured, and frames for cabinet pictures and small Venetian mirrors. When new, the effect may have been beautiful, but is not so now. Amber is a delicate

and perishable substance, which does not stand the test of time. The sort most highly prized is opaque, and of a delicate primrose colour, but this is apt to turn mealy. Another description is the clear bright yellow, which thickens if exposed to the air, and becomes like resin or bees-wax.

We sought in vain for specimens of the insect world, while we gazed in wonder at these walls. The floor, too, excited our admiration. It was made of ebony, inlaid with mother-of-pearl in scrolls, and was very handsome, greatly heightening the effect of the amber. The adjoining room was also a curiosity, the walls and part of the furniture being incrusted with lapis lazuli. The tables were of the most beautiful blue which it is possible to conceive, but parts of the walls had a greyish tinge, and here and there ran veins of golden flecks, which is considered an imperfection. One of the largest saloons is entirely covered with pictures, which are let into the panelled walls, the paintings having been cut to suit the places they occupy. They are fortunately of no great merit. The last room we entered, the smallest and the simplest, was the bedroom of Alexander I. His camp bed and plain toilet apparatus were used for the last time the day he set off to meet

his death at Taganrog; his pocket-handkerchief, marked L 23, lay on a table, and added to the long list of royal *mouchoirs* which we had seen during the last two months. We had not sufficient time to enter the gardens, but the back of the palace is shaded by lofty trees, and the shrubberies beyond appeared to be extensive and well cared for.

CHAPTER IV.

Visit to the Arsenal—Pleasure-Grounds—Great Fires in Winter—Struggle for Water—Collection of Coin in the Hermitage—The Theatre—Collection of Paintings—Bargaining for Rizas—A Russian Family—Neglect of Personal Cleanliness—The Summer Gardens—Kriloff's Monument—The Emperor Nicholas and the Fabulist—Sketch of Kriloff's Life—The Michael Palace—The Aprazin and Stehukin Dvor—Equestrian Statue of Peter the Great—Academy of Arts—The English Library—The Preobrojensky Church.

AS we were about to get into our vehicle, Louis came up with a whispered request, "Might the French gentleman"—one by whom we had been joined in our examination of the rooms—"share our carriage?" All Great Britain rose up in our breasts at this request, and we uttered a tremendous "No;" but seeing the poor man walk off in a desponding manner, and having ascertained that he had no other means of reaching the arsenal before it closed, we relented, and sent Louis flying after him

with a request that he would accept a place. The individual returned with radiant face, and hat clasped tight to his bosom; but we begged that he would restore it to the top of his head. He forthwith mounted, screwed himself into the smallest possible corner, and off we set.

The arsenal, a rotunda of red brick, lies in the middle of the pleasure-grounds, which are very large. The Russians here always had a passion for Tartar and Chinese architecture, which was carried to a great height. Now and then a vista opened in the woods, and we had before us the exact scene depicted upon willow-pattern plates—a winding lake with a bridge of bamboo; a cottage painted red, and covered with green dragons; the gardener's house. No part of the still life was wanting; and we agreed with the exclamation, "Tiens, c'est bien drôle!" which escaped involuntarily from our companion. We passed a sheet of water on which a tiny fleet rode at anchor—the boyish amusement of the present High Admiral, the Arch-Duke Constantine. Dotted down in every direction there were Dutch cow-houses, Swiss châlets, Royal baby-houses, Chinese pagodas, a Turkish kiosk with a minaret, a Greek colonnade, and finally a handsome bridge,

arching over a stream, and surmounted by a collection of statues on pedestals, a numerous company, favourites of the great Catherine. The park, which is eighteen miles round, includes some small palaces; but, anxious to reach the arsenal before it closed, we did not turn aside to visit them.

The arsenal contains a great quantity of warlike implements, ancient and modern. There are charming little Gothic recesses, with stained glass, and a stand in the middle of each, containing some rare treasures—a fine and early missal, once the property of a pope; jewels, family miniatures, and relics; the toy-drum and trumpet in silver presented to the infant Paul by his mother. But the pride of the museum are the saddle, saddle-cloths, and trappings, presents to the Czar by the Sultan, when he was compelled to appeal to Russia in an emergency. The saddle is so encrusted with diamonds that the ground of purple velvet is scarcely to be seen. The stirrups are of pure gold; and the brilliants on the holsters would make a necklace for a queen. The saddle-cloths, of violet velvet, were also lovely, being bordered by the most beautiful patterns, arabesques, knots, and tassels, wrought in diamonds, while at each corner a brilliant, the size of a large pea, was

worked into the design. Perhaps the object of greatest historical interest is the letter written by Bessières to Davoust, governor of Moscow, ordering him to evacuate the city.

Depositing Monsieur at the gates of the park, he took leave of us with innumerable bows and expressions of gratitude; and we drove on to the station, to see if Monsieur de G—— had arrived; but he was not to be seen. After dining at Vauxhall, the fashionable establishment, we set off to explore the extensive pleasure grounds, which are nicely laid out, and enlivened by a plentiful stream of water, occasionally forming lakes, sometimes winding through pretty meadows, and crossed by rustic bridges. On one side of the park ran an extensive carriage-drive. It was amusing to watch the numerous handsome equipages, with fine horses, which were moving slowly along, the Vauxhall at Tsarskoé being a fashionable Summer resort.

Hearing music in the distance, we bent our steps towards it, and found a crowd of people drinking coffee, eating ices, and enjoying themselves. Procuring chairs, we sat down along with the rest to listen to Strauss's admirable band, and in a short time were joined by Mon-

sieur de G——, who had been detained in town by a severe thunderstorm, accompanied by torrents of rain, which we had wholly escaped, by leaving at an earlier hour. He pointed out some of the people who were promenading in a circle; and we were rather surprised to hear that amongst the throng were many of the *élite* of St. Petersburg society—a fact we should certainly not have discovered for ourselves, the toilets being in bad taste; and as for beauty, there was none. We sat until the clear green late evening stole upon us, and a thin bright crescent of a moon glittered through the trees. The perfect time of the subdued music was delightful; and now and then Monsieur told an interesting anecdote, or gave an amusing account of the Winter gaiety, promising to lend us furs if we would return for the season. The balls he described as magnificent—the abundance of light, the beauty of the floral arrangements, for which the country is so celebrated, the superb toilets and the jewels, all aiding in the striking effect produced. The Royal family appear occasionally for a short time at these great fêtes; otherwise they confine themselves entirely to the society of their own large family circle, not mixing even with the highest nobles.

Our friend spoke of the Emperor as being much liked, kind in manner, and considerate. The Royal Dukes are also exceedingly popular.

The Russians delight in seeing a conflagration. However severe the weather may be, the *jeunesse dorée* of St. Petersburg rush to the scene of action, where the excitement is intense, and the play of light on the snow and ice indescribably beautiful. In Winter, fires are of frequent occurrence; and there is seldom any water to be procured. "I myself," our informant said, "on my first arrival at the French Embassy, was nearly causing a blaze. I had three rooms allotted to me, each provided with a stove, which reached from the floor to the ceiling; and, feeling the cold exceedingly, I ordered them to be fed with an extra-quantity of fuel, in consequence of which one of the chimneys took fire, and sent forth a great deal of smoke and showers of sparks. The Ambassador was sitting in his far-off apartments, ignorant of what had occurred, when his door flew open, and the major-domo entered in haste, to say that a carriage full of the youthful Royal dukes was waiting below. Hastily shuffling on Court dress and orders, the Ambassador asked his servant if he knew why they had come. 'To see the French Embassy burnt, sir,' was the naïve reply. They

were fortunately disappointed of this spectacle. But thus my little misfortune came to light," concluded our friend. Wood, he said, was cheap; and although obliged to keep his stoves alight nine months of the year, he reckoned that four hundred francs cleared the expense.

The one domestic trial we had to endure was a daily struggle for water. In vain we explained that it was our habit to use it at night as well as in the morning. The chamber-maid, a pale girl, with slits for eyes, and a flat face, was a mixture of sly sulkiness and stupidity. She never would understand us, and often we were obliged to have recourse to the peasant, who was very obliging, and, although at times sorely puzzled, always ended by making a salaam and murmuring, "Sluches."

We walked, in the fresh morning air, to the Hermitage, where we devoted the first two hours to the collection of coins, which is very rich. The cases in which they are contained turn on a pivot, which is most convenient. As in other countries, unstamped lumps of metal were the first tokens of value that passed current in Russia; the very word ruble means "a rough bit." The platina, or half-pound of silver, dates from the time of Vladimir I., and was rare, for Russia had no mines of its own until Siberia

was annexed. Medals were struck under the Grand-Dukes, but a regular silver and copper coinage was executed, for the first time, at Tver and Moscow, in the reign of Ivan III., who died, very old, in 1505, and before whose time commerce was almost entirely transacted by barter. For small change bits of merlin, squirrel-skins, ears, and even half ears, were used, and called polouchki. The Anglo-Saxon coins so plentifully found in Russia were to us the most interesting; the earliest dates from the reign of Ethelred II. The Greek coins are of course the most beautiful. A case of Scythian coins also attracted us greatly; they were of gold, and on one side they bore a head, on the reverse a Scythian bow-case; and there was a very perfect series of the coinage of the Greek settlements on the Black Sea. With a little trouble we found the collection of Irish money. The curator of the Dublin Museum once told us that he had received a visit from a gentleman connected with the numismatic department in the Hermitage. "And I was not a little crest-fallen," he added, "when, on showing him our collection of ancient Irish coins, he exclaimed, 'Are those all you have? Why, we have a basketful of them in St. Petersburg.' Most of this money was found near Novgorod.

Having quite fatigued ourselves in this department, we gave ourselves in charge to a custodian, who appeared anxious to show us something, but who only spoke his own language. He took us to the theatre, where the Empress Catherine occasionally assumed a part in the comedy acted for her amusement. When only a spectator, she sat upon a hard wooden bench, without a back, in the second row (what uncomfortable times those must have been!). This theatre is larger, but by no means so pretty as the one at Versailles. We passed from it to a suite of reserved rooms, part of the old palace. They were charming apartments, and from them there was a delightful view of the Court Quay, and over it to the broad, flowing river, covered with curious, busy craft; while, upon the opposite bank, the spire of the fortress Cathedral shot up into the air, a beautiful object from every point of view. These sunny rooms were those occupied by the Prince of Wales. They are full of cabinet pictures, Claude's and Boucher's. The chimney-piece in one of the saloons is very beautiful, being formed of the rare Siberian ribbon jasper, in which streaks of bright red, four inches wide, alternated with layers of semi-transparent green, resembling jade stone. This suite of rooms

could be entered from a gallery at the back, lighted by high windows looking out upon a courtyard. Its width was curtailed by a wooden partition about eight feet high, subdivided into chambers, which received but little light from the corridor. These dens—for they are little better—were allotted to the ladies and gentlemen of the suites, the valets sleeping on mats in the gallery. The French collection of paintings is fine, containing a great number of Claudes, Poussins, Mignards, and others, and near it is a saloon entirely devoted to the works of Caraletti. The Russian school, the greater part of which consists of historical pictures, we did not much admire, the figures being stiff and hard, the colouring glaring, and the composition not telling its own story. One picture was, however, very striking; it was by an artist of the house of Avairovski (probably a Pole), and represented the Deluge. A boundless waste of waters was quietly rolling along in heaving billows, too placid to burst into foam, and over them the mild sun of early morning threw a slight haze of golden light.

Reserving the antiquities for another day, we received some soft words of thanks for our copeks, and turned towards home, refreshing ourselves *en route* with cakes and lemonade,

which restored us so much that we determined to return by the Gostinnoi Dvor, and see if we could manage to strike a bargain for a couple of Rizas. Passing a window which contained a tempting display of dusky virgins, garmented in precious metals, we entered the shop, and asked the prices in French; but, as no one understood that language, we pulled out a pencil and paper, and pointing to the picture we coveted, handed the paper to the shopman, giving our purse a jingle. He wrote down fifty rubles, and we, with a great deal of head-shaking, placed thirty under the fifty. This produced a corresponding movement from behind the counter, but the paper was returned with forty upon it, and the matter ended by our giving thirty-five rubles, a reduction with which we were highly content. Had we made our purchase through a commissionnaire, the fifteen rubles would probably have gone into his pocket instead of ours. We reached Bellevue greatly pleased with ourselves and our acquisition. The faces of the Virgin and Child were most delicately painted, the elaborately-wrought casing being in silver, and silver-gilt.

On Monsieur de G——'s arrival he took us to the Court jeweller's. There was no very great display, Summer being the dead season. We

also entered a shop kept by a Persian, who had all sorts of curiosities, silver and nickel brooches, with pretty tassels hanging from them, which came from Ispahan; and Circassian girdles, in gold and silver; but we were most attracted by the antique Russian chains, the workmanship of which was first-rate, formed of minute links in pure silver. They were flat in shape, and nearly an inch broad, tapering at the ends, and finished off by a loop. These chains were formerly used by the clergy, but now they suspend the glittering crosses, so universally worn, by a thinner description. The Persian carpets were tempting, but costly, and some fine specimens were produced of the national *baschlik*, a sort of scarf with a pointed hood and two lappets, which, when well put on, is an exceedingly picturesqne garment. The fabric of soft black, scarlet, or green wool, was in some instances stiff with gold embroidery, others were covered with beautiful designs in gold braid. We greatly coveted them, but were deterred by the prices, which ranged between fifteen and sixty guineas.

We spent the evening in hunting for some intimate friends whom we were very desirous of seeing. General C—— had a command near Warsaw, but he and his family spent part of the year in St. Petersburg, occasionally travel-

ling. He was himself thin and bent, with a keen eye. His appearance betrayed an utter disregard of soap and water, and he had been well peppered in no less than seventeen battles; but the face of Madame was like a rosy apple. The eldest daughter was in bad health, and, like the younger, a little thing of sixteen, was very clever. One day a question arising respecting the currency of different countries, the little Sophie said, "I will tell you, my dear friends, how it is." And the whole subject was explained to us most clearly. These young ladies had only one demerit—they never washed more than the middle of their faces, which were encircled by a grey rim. A little boy, a maid, Katinka, and a tutor, completed the family circle. When we first met with them in Germany, Katinka was the horror of our maid, as she kept to her national habit of undressing only on Saturday, when the weather was hot. The great fat tutor was remarkable for the fact of his wearing a bright red wig all the week, and appearing in one of jet black on Sundays. The General and his wife, like many Russian couples, were devoted to one another, and had a sitting-room to themselves, the young ladies, the tutor, and little Tarska, the boy, occupying another, into which we occasionally penetrated, to find the

whole party smoking cigarettes in solemn silence, in an atmosphere which made us shudder. The account given by this family of their home life was interesting. For months they never saw a friend, the deep snow which covered all around preventing intercourse. Occasionally they went out in sledges, but not often.

There was no medical man in the district, but a medical officer came round once a month, the more serious cases of illness being left until he arrived. Madame had a dispensary of her own. into which she retired every morning with a couple of maids, to make up prescriptions, which she had been taught to read, and to see the sick people who came for medicine and advice. The members of the family passed half the night reading in their separate rooms, meeting in the small hours for a slight meal, and rising late. Mademoiselle's taste led her to write and translate stories, and Sophie was in the habit of teaching in the village school. They were both thoroughly well read in the popular English literature of the day; and on our expressing surprise at this, they explained that they took in certain journals, three of which they named, the *Contemporary*, the *Library for General Reading*, and the *Russian Messenger*, a periodical which gave the cream of the debates from the

Times. These journals supply the place of newspapers, which in Russia are very poor productions, containing little besides advertisements; whereas in the above publications are to be found excellent translations, not only of the best novels of the day, but also of higher-class books. The little Sophie showed us a couple of these journals, one of which contained chapters from Grote's History of Greece and Motley's Dutch Republic. It is not surprising that the in-door life led by Russian ladies in the provinces, during the long Winter months, should make them great readers. It was more difficult to arrive at the religious opinions of our friends; though they appeared to incline to the Lutheran faith, and expressed great horror of the secular clergy, on account of their intemperate lives. Such were the friends whom we hoped to find in the Vassili Ostrof; but, alas! they were in the country, with the exception of the little Sophie, who was married, and living near Vienna.

Our hotel was not far from the Summer Garden, which, in hot weather, is a pleasant shady place, with spreading trees, leafy alleys, and statues. The ground belongs to a small palace in which Peter the Great was wont to ruralize. In the centre there is a most charac-

teristic and interesting monument, erected by the children of Russia, to the memory of their friend, Kriloff. He is represented in his old dressing-gown, smiling down upon their sports, as he did in life, while they look up into his benevolent face, and repeat the fables which he wrote, both for their amusement and to lash the vices of elder people. It is a great honour to have a statue in Russia, where such things are so rare that they puzzle the simple country folk, who call them *bolsani*, or idols. Under an innocent appearance, Kriloff's fables—which ran through 40,000 (?) editions in ten years—have a deep political meaning, and are exceedingly satirical. For instance, the "Education of the Lion," is a skit at the manner in which Alexander I. was brought up by the Genevan tutor, La Harpe. The King of the Lions had a son whose education was a source of deep anxiety to the Royal parent. The Fox would not do as schoolmaster, for, however clever, he told lies; the Mole, so regular in his habits, was short-sighted; the Panther was brave and strong, but fit for nothing except fighting; and so on through a long list. In this dilemma the king's old friend, the Eagle, offered his services. What a weight off the mind of the Lion! The cub was immediately got ready, and sent to the

Eagle's court to teach him to govern. Time passed, and each year the Royal father is gratified by adulatory accounts of the young Lion's abilities and courage. The king of the animals at last sends for his heir, assembles his people, and requests his son to tell them what he can do. "Papa," answers the Prince, "I can tell where each bird, from the Eagle to the Quail, can find water; where each lives and how many eggs it lays; and when you have made up your mind to transfer your power to me, I will immediately begin to teach the beasts how to build nests." On this all the beasts howled aloud; their Tsarevitch, they said, was acquainted with birds only, and was utterly ignorant how to rule beasts.

Some of these fables were suppressed, but the censorship is often evaded, a considerable number of Russian works being circulated in manuscript. The censorship has a great objection to any personal reflection on royalty, or insinuation against the Holy Orthodox Church, but on other subjects it is more liberal than is generally supposed. Amongst the higher classes Carlyle's "French Revolution," translated into Russian, is universally read, and cheap editions of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" have an enormous sale in the provinces.

Kriloff's fable of the Lion fell into the hands

of the Emperor Nicholas, who, soon after meeting the author at a ball, went up to him and kissed him on both cheeks, saying:—"Write on, old man—write on!" Next day the suppressed fables were published, and from one end of Russia to the other the name of Kriloff is a household word. He was as happy in his traits of Russian manners and peasant life as in his political hits.

Born on the banks of the Volga, Kriloff led a half-wild life, passing entire days beside the broad flowing river, watching the washer-women, and talking to moujiks (serfs) and peasants. Nor was he ever thoroughly tamed, for, during his latter days at St. Petersburg, he committed the greatest eccentricities. More than careless as to his dress, like Dominie Sampson, his garments had to be replaced by stealth. He had a great contempt for clothes, and on the banks of the Volga his costume is said to have been scanty indeed. The apartments he occupied for some years looked into the Summer Garden, and he would sit at the window in his shirt playing the violin. When visiting he would produce the most extraordinary articles from his pocket, into which they had been put under the impression that they were handkerchiefs. On one occasion he

attended a levee in a new coat which excited great mirth, the buttons being neatly wrapped up in silver paper, as they had come from the tailor's. His rooms were fearfully dirty. His servant, too idle to bring a candlestick, was in the habit of placing the dip candle on the table in a pool of tallow; and the old gentleman increased the general disorder by his love for birds. Twice a day he strewed the floor with oats, and opened his windows to admit the flocks of sacred pigeons which collected from all parts of the town. Fortunately he was very fond of bathing, and plunged daily into the canal, even in Winter, when the cold was not too severe, having the ice broken for his morning's dip.

In the year 1811 he was appointed to an important place in the Imperial library, which he held for thirty years. There his rooms looked out on the Gostinnoi Dvor, and his delight was to listen to the jokes which passed between the peasants and the drosky-drivers, and watch the endless train of people making purchases or loitering about. He was fond of promenading in the bazaar, the tradespeople in which loved a humorous encounter with him. In his old age honours were showered upon him, but he grew fat from indolence, and

the only amusement that retained its charm for him was the sight of a fire. The moment he heard the engines rattle, he would jump out of bed, and hasten to the scene of the conflagration, where the brilliant effects produced by the play of light upon the ice and snow greatly delighted him. From poems left amongst his papers, it was found that Kriloff had his ideal, his "Annette," whom in early life he had hoped to marry, and whose memory retained its influence over him to the last. On his death, he was honoured with a public funeral, which was attended by such multitudes that vast St. Isak's could not contain them, and long was the train, from the Tsarevitch to the peasant, which followed his remains up the Nevsky Prospekt to the monastery of St. Alexander. We had a translation of his fables, and it was pleasant to read them under the trees, stopping now and then to glance at the kind old face. The monument erected to him is handsome, and the pediment is ornamented with basso-rilievos representing scenes from his stories. At his club a delicate compliment was paid to the poet's memory. After dinner, he had been in the habit of slumbering in a certain corner, the wall of which became strongly marked by

his head, and this memorial of him was carefull preserved.

In the Summer Garden, a chapel or shrine of costly marbles and porphyries, erected close to the road, marks the spot where the Czar's life was attempted in 1866. The inscription on it, in letters of gold, is: "Touch not mine annointed." But the great interest of the place is the Michael Palace, or the Cartha, as it is also called—a grim building, which frowns from across ditches and drawbridges. Many of the windows are grated, the building having been formerly used as a military prison; but it is now occupied by a school of engineering, under General Todleben. This palace, which cost a vast sum, was built by the Emperor Paul, who caused the following inscription, in Sclavonic, to be placed over the gateway: "On my house will the blessing of the Lord rest for evermore." Alas! how vain a prophecy! From it the eye turns to a small window on the left, lighting a blood-stained chamber, in which that Emperor was strangled in the prime of his manhood.

In the afternoon, Louis conducted us to the Aprazin and Stehukin Dvor, bazaars for the sale of inferior articles and second-hand goods. They are labyrinths of wooden houses, stalls, and sheds, which cover acres of ground, and in

which every article of dress or domestic utility is to be found, but generally in the last stage of decay. We drove slowly through the wider pereuloks, and more than once great piles of tattered gowns and mouldy shoes had to be removed by dirty women and tall, wild, bearded men, who scowled at us in a sullen way. This spot has the worst possible reputation; it is the St. Giles's of St. Petersburg, and many a stolen article is said to be concealed in the Stchukin Dvor. Half frightened, we passed from it, into the hay-market, a great square wilderness, only attractive in Winter, when it contains stacks of frozen animals and birds, as well as fodder.

There are some fine monuments in St. Petersburg. The most splendid is the equestrian statue which stands in the great square near St. Isak's, erected by Catherine II. to the memory of Peter I. The pedestal, in itself a wonder, came from the Gulf of Finland—a block of red granite which weighs 1500 tons. The monument in memory of the Emperor Nicholas is also an equestrian one, and at each corner of the pedestal stands a figure in bronze, of life-size, modelled after busts of the Empress and her three daughters. The Alexander Column is formed of a shaft of granite eighty-four feet high, but the intense cold has cracked the

stone. The weight is something enormous, and it stands upon six tiers of piles.

We had time enough before dinner to visit the Academy of Arts, which, if not absolutely founded by Peter, owes its existence to the care with which it was fostered by that sovereign. One of his museums proving very expensive, his minister proposed that a small entrance-fee should be paid by the public. "No such thing!" exclaimed Peter in wrath—"on the contrary, I desire that anyone who comes to see my collection may have a glass of wine or a cup of coffee." We found a charming gallery of modern pictures, chiefly of the French school. We met the *directeur*, who spoke French fluently, and accompanied us through the rooms. One of the finest pictures is Paul Delaroche's "Cromwell," a noble painting, with a most touching expression of sorrow upon the features. We were already acquainted with the sister pictures, for he painted three. One of them is in England; the other was presented by the artist to his native town, and is in the Musée at Nismes. The picture called Vernet's "Daughter carried away by the Angel of Death," we did not care about; in painting it he went out of his usual style, but was induced to attempt the subject by the prayers of

a friend, a Russian prince, and the name bestowed upon it is a misconception. There are some very beautiful scenes in Morocco by Delacroix, and some charming Meissonniers, as well as several fine works by Ingres, Gaudin, and other artists equally celebrated.

The Museum also contains two fine works from the hand of Ary Scheffer. Amongst the historical pictures there is a painful scene from the life of the unfortunate Princess Tarakanova. She is represented standing upon a bedstead, during a flood in the Neva, regarding with horror the rapidly-increasing waters, which threaten to submerge the prison in which she is confined; rats and other vermin, equally terrified, seek safety by clinging to her skirts, and even mounting to her shoulders. It is pleasant to know, however, that this princess, the reputed daughter of the Empress Elizabeth, died a natural death in the beginning of this century; and even the more miserable impostor, who assumed her name, expired quietly in the dungeons of the fortress. Amongst the portraits is an original one of Catherine II., large, handsome, and healthy, with her great grey eyes and blooming complexion. But the most interesting is a likeness of Peter the Great, taken after death.

On our way home, we stopped at the so-called English library, Monsieur de G—— having advised us to get a "Murray" before visiting the antiquities in the Hermitage. After dinner the hours passed very pleasantly—the view of cupolas and towers gaining in beauty as the clear evening light stole on. An endless stream of human life flowed along the broad way beneath, and the cool green of the trees which sheltered the opposite palace refreshed the eye. Our "Murray" enlightened us as to the name of this building, which was the Anitchkoff Palace, built by the Empress Elizabeth for her favourite, Count Kasumofski; afterwards inhabited by the widow of the Emperor Nicholas, and now the residence of the Tsarevitch and the Princess, his wife.

The rest of the evening we employed in visiting some of the principal churches. The Preobrojensky church has a military aspect, being fitted with cannon, flags, and other warlike trophies. It is called after the celebrated Preobrojensky regiment, which derived its name from the village, near Moscow, where Peter drilled the childish band which afterwords fought so bravely at Pultava. The Troitska church is also warlike in character; and in it the flag of the *Tïger* is triumphantly shown, although only

obtained from a shipwrecked vessel. Another English flag, taken in fair fight, is exhibited with more justifiable pride. As the churches have all the same characteristics, we hurried through them, and returned home, making a detour, in order to catch sight of the lingering after-glow which, in a Summer's evening, flushes the bosom of the broad Neva.

Walking down to the Hermitage, we determined to pass the morning in the rooms which contain the collection of antiquities found on the shores of the Euxine. In the first chamber are the remains discovered at Kertch, the ancient Panticapæum, the most curious of which were taken from a tumulus on a spur of the golden mountain called the "Hill of the Cinders," about three miles from the town. The Kertch collection is placed in the great hall; so called because the museum there was the depôt for the antiquities found on the site of the numerous Greek colonies which fringed the shores of the Black Sea. They were removed to St. Petersburg previous to the English and Turkish occupation in 1855, when, alas! the allies did not behave well with regard to the remaining antiquities. Many objects from Kertch were privately brought to England, and nothing, we were told, enraged the Rus-

sians so much during the whole war as the spoliation at that time of some of the tumuli. The hall itself is worthy of its contents, being very large, and supported by numerous columns of grey Finnish granite, exquisitely polished. It is lighted by a long row of windows, reaching from the ceiling, at the foot of which are placed cages, which contain the smaller and more precious objects. Projecting wings, fitted up with shelves, form small rooms, which can be closed by iron railings and gates. The larger objects are scattered separately about the hall.

The pride of the Hermitage are the contents of the great tumulus at Taman, discovered in 1866, in which was interred a priestess of Ceres, along with her four horses. The golden ornaments with which she was positively covered are considered the finest in the world; their workmanship so exquisite that it is only by the aid of a magnifying glass that it can be appreciated. Under a glass case in the centre of the hall were seven crowns of gold. The finest of these, on which was represented a combat between men and griffins, belonged to this priestess. This museum contains a vase in pottery of Greek work, which is said to be the finest

specimen existing. On it, in bold relief, is depicted a combat between men and griffins. The figures are coloured and gilt. It was found in the Chersonessus, and bore an inscription—"Xenophantes of Athens made it." The gems are few in number; but we had been told to notice one of a heron flying, signed "Daxamenos;" and also one of a Scythian arranging his arrow.

CHAPTER V.

The Fire Brigade—Lake Ladoga—Visit to the Palace of Peterhoff—Amusements of the Empress Elizabeth—Expenditure of Russian Nobles—Former Condition of the Serfs—Peasants—A Bower of Beauty—Geographical Clock—English Park—Collection of Engravings—Antediluvian Remains—Curiosities in the Arsenal—Stenka Razin's Throne of Justice—Museum of Imperial Carriages—The Ecole des Mines—Collection of Minerals.

THE hour for closing having arrived, we took our way home, so fatigued both in body and mind that we passed the evening in our own rooms, and were quietly employed in jotting down some notes relating to the wonderful Kertch collection, when we heard a prodigious noise in the street; and running to the windows, saw a glittering cavalcade, the fire brigade, galloping rapidly by with shining helmets, and foaming horses three abreast. It soon vanished in a

cloud of dust, but we could perceive where the fire was by a thick lurid light in the distance, which was pierced now and then by sharp flickering tongues of flame. These, however, soon died away, and we heard no more of the incident. On the islands, in many parts of the city, there are towers, from whence a constant watch is kept. The moment a fire is discerned, bells are rung, and signals hoisted to indicate the quarter. In consequence of the amount of wood used in building, and the scarcity of water, the value of property annually destroyed in Russia is very considerable.

We breakfasted early next morning, having arranged a visit to Peterhoff, which may be reached in three ways: by the railway, which is uninteresting; the posting road, which passes by the important monastery of St. Sergius, founded in the middle of the last century, and famed for the beauty of its cemetery; and the steamer, from which the traveller obtains a splendid view of St. Petersburg, the Neva, and Cronstadt. We decided in favour of the latter. The boats start from the Michael Bridge; and, on reaching the English Quay, we met an English gentleman with whom we had parted at Wiborg. He and his wife had passed several days in that neighbourhood, and described the

scenery as being exceedingly monotonous, with endless sombre forests, and small settlements of log houses chiefly inhabited by Germans. We had some idea of making an expedition to Lake Ladoga, but what we now heard about it was not tempting. Although it has the merit of being the largest lake in Europe, and is 336 square geographical miles in extent, its banks are low and swampy, and its rapids not remarkable for beauty. By water it lies forty miles from St. Petersburg, and *en route*, there are numbers of great manufactories, one of which, the Russia Sévres, we should much have liked to visit, the porcelain being said to be very good.

The city, as we were quickly borne away from it, certainly looked superb, with its long stretching quays and palaces, decorated churches, bell-towers, cupolas, and golden spires and roofs. The rapidly widening river was alive with steamers and ships in full sail, hastening to the Baltic, together with barges and red-rigged pilot-boats. It would not have been easy to find the parallel to such a scene. As we left the town behind, the great dome of St. Peter's dwindled to a glittering spot in a long line of tender blue, and country houses, village churches, and low woods fringed the shores; but we

skirted the Russian bank to the left, and the objects on the Finnish side became indistinct. There were a good many holiday-seekers on board, amongst whom Monsieur de G—— (who had joined us), found a friend, a strikingly handsome middle-aged man, who, we were afterwards informed, was high in Court favour. We were told his name, but all that we could make out was that it ended in ski; and his wife, said our friend, "would be the loveliest woman in Europe, if she ever washed her face!"

The boat began to dance before we got to our destination, and most of the passengers were glad when the little pier of Peterhoff was reached. The shore was fringed by excited Isvostchicks, flourishing their whips, anxious to secure a fare; and Louis stood by the gangway to be the first on shore, and make a good bargain for the carriage he was to secure for the day. After some good-humoured joking, one was procured, and off we set.

The dust lay thick, the sun was burning, and it was a great relief when, passing through a tall iron gateway, we found ourselves under the shady trees of the Imperial domain. Another quarter of an hour sufficed to bring us to Mont-

plaisir, a long, low, one-storied cottage of red brick, with casement windows, tiled floors, and Dutch stoves of blue and white pottery. The rooms were like those in a farm-house; in appearance most primitive, but not uncomfortable. Many quaint Dutch pictures, collected by the Czar, hung on the walls; and an old wooden clock told its own tale as to the country of its birth. Peter was exceedingly fond of this residence, and in it he breathed his last. The little chamber, with the long iron bedstead, remained just as when he left it; the sheets of coarse home-spun linen were covered with a quilt of beautiful old satin, enriched by faded embroidery; while suspended from the wall hung his dressing-gown and nightcap. The death of Peter, though physically painful, was not unhopeful, judging from the words he frequently repeated: "I believe, and I trust;" and the striking sentence he uttered: "This it is which at length can quench my thirst; this alone can refresh me." The little chamber was thronged by people anxious to kiss his hand; and his last effort of consciousness was a nod to them. He was then left with his religious attendants, and expired uttering the word, "Hereafter!"

The Empress Elizabeth occasionally spent the day in this Summer-house, in which her amusement used to be cooking her dinner. A wide gravel walk separated the house from two formal pieces of water, and one of the sights of the place is to see the carp fed. A bell is rung, the water is agitated, and the fish, big and little, come gaping up in great numbers, some of them being old fellows white with age, and so blind that the nimble young ones steal the morsel from under their very noses. This Montplaisir was a pleasant place on a hot Summer's day; the pine trees afforded ample shade, their odour was delightful, and we were quite sorry to receive marching orders. Ten minutes' walk through the woods took us to Marly, a *cottage orné*, with a garden in front, full of old-fashioned flowers. The rooms were very small, and filled with queer little knic-knacs, brought from abroad by Peter. In one of them there was an open grate, looking very English; an old mirror hung over the mantelshelf. A wooden frame, fitted with two small shelves, contained tiny cups and morsels of china, which, for fear of their being carried off, were carefully fastened down with cement. Flemish and Dutch pictures covered the walls, and there were stands and

little tables laden with curiosities—beads, purses, models, all sorts of odds and ends, which had attracted the attention of the Czar. A glass gallery, furnished with divans, ran at the back of the house, and opened upon a terrace overhanging the sea.

We sat down in the deep cypress shade to admire the view. A wild tangle of wood curved round on either side, and the waves murmured up against the jagged points of black rock, to which clung long streaming seaweeds, that waved to and fro in the clear water, like mermaids' hair. We nearly faced the frowning batteries of Cronstadt, too distant to distinguish the many-pointed guns, but we could see the mighty Russian fleet riding at anchor, with the double black eagle flying from the tall masts. What would Peter have said if he could have returned to earth for one short hour, and have counted those vast ironclads and monitors which we were gazing at from the very spot on which he was wont to sit and contemplate his own tiny navy. "It is thus," he says in his will, "that Russia, which I found a brook and left a river, must, under my successors, grow to a mighty sea, destined to fertilize worn-out Europe, and advance its waves over

all obstacles, if my successors are only capable of guiding the stream." As he wrote thus, we could picture to ourselves Peter, with prophetic eye, peering into the future. One hundred and thirteen years after the little Grandpapa was launched, the tiny ancestor of the Russian navy was carried in triumph through the fleet, and saluted by twenty-six ships of the line, twenty-one frigates, ten brigs, and seven gunboats. This anniversary was kept in the year 1836. The place was full of memories. Catherine II., when a girl, would evade her German tormentors, and run down to enjoy peace and freedom upon the terrace of Marly.

We had to drive up to the Palace of Peterhoff, which is situated on an elevated terrace a little more than half-a-mile from the bay. Like Tsarskoé Sélo, it is a long two-storied building, with a high roof of green copper. It was built by Peter, and remains the colour he caused it to be painted, bright yellow, the hue of marigold, the plentiful arabesques of stucco being picked out in white. These palaces, with their mixture of tea-green, buff, red, or pink, strike the Summer tourist as extraordinary, but they must be delightful to the eye when the country is wrapped in a deadly cold winding-

sheet of snow, and that for more than half the year.

The present Imperial family are fond of Peterhoff, which they inhabit for a month or six weeks every Summer. It is a cheerful, comfortable, old-fashioned palace, without being exactly grand. The ground-floor is furnished in a homely manner; the long suites of rooms above contain a good deal of fine tapestry, old china, a few good pictures, and some half-dozen japanned cabinets of merit. One chamber, which is the delight of the guide, contains upwards of five hundred paintings, all of the same size—portraits of peasant girls, taken in the twenty-nine different departments of Russia. Some of the faces are very pretty, with fair though pale skins, golden hair, and blue eyes. Of course there is a Chinese room, the divans in which are as broad as ordinary beds, the pale blue satin being enlivened by fierce green dragons, sporting with fiery tongues in fields of crimson poppies and many-coloured flowers. In a deep window-seat were placed some little tables, covered with pretty and ingenious toys, the childish delight of Nicholas and his brother. There is nothing regal about the Palace at Peterhoff, excepting its size; but yet it is a

charming place, and the grounds and woods at the back are very extensive. In front the long ranges of windows look down upon a broad gravel terrace, bordered with handsome stone balustrades, from which slope the water-works, which are the finest in Russia. They are arranged somewhat after the manner of those of St. Cloud, with marble steps, basins and parterres of flowering shrubs, and numerous statues from the antique—the Discobal, the Dying Gladiator, the Fawn, and many others.

At the bottom of the slope commenced a long avenue of cypress-trees, which grow about six yards apart. A stream of water, enclosed by stone copings, flowed down the middle, and the view terminated in a patch of bright blue sea, over which tiny white sails were glinting in the sunshine. We sat on the terrace for nearly an hour, Louis having gone to some distant office with our passport (nearly the only time when it proved of use), in order to obtain cards of admittance to some small palaces in the grounds. He brought them, along with the news that the water-works were to play at half-past six o'clock, so we determined to drive at once to the restaurant and dine, in order to have the evening at our disposal. Monsieur ordered dinner to be served in an upstairs room,

with a bow-window and balcony, from which the view was delightful. Cronstadt, with its deep moats was before us, with the woody Finnish shore, and many an outward-bound ship, with bulging sail, was scudding out to sea. After telling us that he meant to order an economical dinner, Monsieur went on to speak of the great expense of living in St. Petersburg. The necessaries of life are not dear—meat, bread, and wood being decidedly cheap; "but," he added, "anything in the shape of luxury is enormous. I, as a bachelor, could mount a comfortable establishment in Paris upon what is poverty here. My stall at the Opera, twice a week, costs me not a little."

"One night," he continued, "after the theatre, I, along with two young Russians of rank, went into a restaurant; we had three mutton chops and a couple of bottles of ordinary Burgundy, and the bill amounted to three hundred francs! A noble seldom cares to inquire into the state of his income. With plenty of money in his pocket, he is indifferent as to what he pays; and, if he happens to have none, he gives the same orders, and never thinks of paying at all! In the time of Nicholas and Alexander I., the Crown eagerly lent money on land, the condition being that, if the

sum borrowed was not paid off in ten years, the estate became Crown property."

We did not begin dinner with the usual *takuska*, or salted delicacies; but our first dish, a tureen of *iced* soup, was one thoroughly national; the foundation of it being *kvas*, a liquid made of fermented rye, thickened by a *purée* of nettles. Slices of cold boiled salmon, pieces of herring, chopped cucumbers, onions, and herbs were served separately, and then mixed together, lumps of ice also being thrown in. We were divided as to the merits of this soup, but it was certainly cool and refreshing, and the only remarkable part of the banquet, the rest consisting of cutlets, a partridge, two vegetables, a bottle of *vin ordinaire*, and a cup of *café noir;* and we were supposed to have got off well for ten shillings each!

The pauses during the courses being long, Monsieur de G—— told us a good deal about the former condition of the now free serf—a subject on which we were very ignorant, all we knew being that the system owed its origin to Boris Godunoff, who, disapproving of the nomadic habits of the people, promulgated a ukase attaching all labourers to the soil. At first they were not altogether enslaved, although

their liberty was curtailed; but they gradually became so, and in no reign did the yoke press so heavily upon them as in that of Catherine the Great, who thought nothing of presenting a few hundreds of these unhappy people to one of her favourites. Indeed, this became a favourite Royal way of rewarding services; a state of things which was put an end to by Alexander I., who also ameliorated the condition of the serfs. He made it, for instance, illegal to sell them apart from the land, or to separate members of a family; and in his reign the serf was enabled to hold property, and masters were allowed to liberate their moujiks. But even in their worst days the serfs had privileges. A certain quantity of land (a Russian noble values his estate, not on account of its extent, but according to the number of men upon it) was appropriated to their use. This formed the commune, each man being entitled to an equal share, with a hut and a garden upon it, and the settlement was governed by a chief chosen from among themselves. It is believed that the Emperor Nicholas had an idea of emancipating the serfs, and it is certain that, by many of his acts, he paved the way to the good and humane step taken by the present Czar. Only those nobles who were

hereditary could possess serfs, but the rank was easily gained. The lowest military grade as officer sufficed, but the civilian who served the state had to mount higher in order to become eligible. This Nicholas altered, and allowed no one to found an hereditary noblesse who had not risen to the fifth grade in each service, which is one of the highest steps.* Great nobles could count their serfs by thousands; the middling rich possessed from five hundred up to a thousand; the poorest not more than twenty, a number which they were not allowed to increase.

The serfs were happiest under the man of great estate, who often gave up to them the control of his property, claiming in lieu an annual sum from each labourer. In age or sickness they looked to their master for support, but since the emancipation the proprietor has rid himself of this burden. Great was the strife between the Czar and the nobles, the cry of the latter being, "Emancipate, if you will, but let us keep our land!" The Czar, however, carried his measure of "Emancipation with the land," so that the owners of estates had to abandon their claims to all

* Hereditary noblesse could be founded by the will of the Czar.

land originally set aside for the commune; and the moujik has now not only his bit of ground and cabin, but is paid for his services. He is, however, still attached to the soil by a slender thread. If he absents himself from his commune above a certain time, he loses his right of proprietorship, fears being entertained that, but for some such enactment, the moujiks might return to their original wandering habits. Immense sums, as indemnification, had to be paid to the nobles, half of which was granted by government, the rest raised by taxes upon the communes, and until this is paid off, the serf must necessarily remain poor.*

We asked Monsieur to explain the difference between the serf and the peasant, which had frequently puzzled us in reading Russian stories. It seems that Nicholas organized a system by which serfs could become Crown serfs, or peasants, free men, with the exception of making an annual payment of ten rubles a year for a certificate. Hence the class called peasant may be found amongst rich farmers, tradesmen, and even in the liberal professions; the poorer sort work in the towns, and fill menial positions, such as the one occupied by the "peasant" at our hotel.

* I believe that the debt is now paid off.

A little after six, we drove down to the grounds at Peterhoff. A large number of gay people were assembled, and there was a considerable sprinkling of uniforms. Everyone was bent on pleasure, and it was a pretty scene—charming, when the watery cascades began to roll down the marble steps. Then we perceived how much the bright colours added to the effect; the yellow palace, the great vases of red geraniums, the flowering shrubs, the glitter of the golden statues, over whose heads water-gods, nymphs, and Tritons were spouting showers of spray, that formed rainbows; while tall cranes and aquatic birds stood amongst the reeds, streams issuing from their long bills.

The most striking feature of all was the cypress avenue, where between each tall tree one single jet arose high into the air, returning to the earth in a misty cloud, and forming a delightful contrast to the sombre green of the foliage. A military band was playing, and the cool evening crept on, bringing with it an atmosphere of hazy gold. It was delightful, and we had enjoyed it for above an hour, when our practical Louis came to remind us that we had more to see, and that railways were inexorable. We visited a perfect bower of beauty, which had belonged to the Tsarevitch, a bachelor abode,

which he had, on his marriage, presented to one of his brothers. The little garden was kept to perfection; flowering creepers hung from the verandahs, and nodded to us from the rustic balconies; the air was heavy with their rich perfume. The interior of the cottage was as verdant as the exterior, and here we saw in perfection the manner of arranging their rooms, for which the Russians are celebrated. The walls were lined, half way up, with flowers springing from concealed tins; pyramids arose in the corners, and moveable screens of lattice-work were placed about, covered with plants in full bloom, forming sheets of colour—blue and pink and red and white. So charming an abode was only fit for a prince in a fairy-tale.

A few family photographs were hung about, and placed on a slab was a curious machine for calculating the time of day in every latitude. This was probably the famous geographical clock, bought by the Czar Peter whilst in London, and made by Mr. John Earle, watchmaker, at the sign of the "Dial and Crown," near Essex Street, Strand. The bed-rooms above were fitted up with furniture as fresh as the flowers, which were there grouped on the balconies. It was a nest well calculated to excite the envy of lady-visitors. How happy we

should have been if we could have brought our books and our work, and settled in it for a month.

There are many other little palaces and fanciful abodes in this so-called English park. We drove to a royal retreat, christened Babbignon, a small villa smothered in flowers. Shady trees dipped their branches into a miniature lake, teeming with carp, which rose open-mouthed to the surface the moment their quick ears detected a footstep; for they were pets, and accustomed to be fed at all hours. Our day's work concluded with a visit to a Pompeian villa, built in a marvellously short time, as a surprise to the Empress on the first birthday after her marriage. It stands on an island, but there were boats, all rigged out with flags, to be had at the little pier.

Getting into one of these, manned by a crew of two sailors, with red and white striped shirts and crimson sashes, we made a voyage all too short, for the sky was aglow; every leaf was sharply reflected in the smooth water, which was fringed with shadowy birch in their first Spring blush; and there were great green patches of cool broad leaves, through which peeped starry white water-lilies. The gardens of the villa were ornamented with true Pom-

peian fountains, made of shell-work and bits of coloured glass, and marble statues and busts were scattered about; these, we were told, were carefully covered with hay-bands and sacking during the Winter. The Impluvium was bordered by a wide twisted pattern in mosaic, and white marble colonnades led into chambers which were tinted pale sage green, and covered with designs of birds and butterflies, dancing figures, and tall reeds. Many specimens of ancient marbles were set in slabs, in which were placed antique lamps, Etruscan pottery, or reproductions in green bronze; and there was a table formed of Etruscan glass, of beautiful colours—a sort of glass which it is exceedingly difficult to work, being as hard as pebble, and very brittle. Foreign to the style of architecture, was a tall tower with a spiral staircase, leading to a flat roof; from which we obtained an extensive view over the park, which appeared to be as full of little houses, lakes, and gardens as a child's pleasure-ground made of sprigs, chips, and pebbles.

Louis was anxious that we should visit a few more palaces, but we were tired out, and got into the carriage, thankful, at the end of a couple of miles, to be transferred to a comfortable railway-carriage, and still more so, when

we found ourselves at home, stretched at ease under the faithful guardianship of our St. Sergius. My companion, however, had no sooner closed her eyes than she opened them again, declaring that she was lying on something hard. A candle being lit, and a search instituted, the cause of offence proved to be a copper medal, impressed with the image of St. Dimitri of the Don. It was attached to a very dirty string, which had become so thin that it had probably snapped during the troubled sleep of some wearied traveller, who was even now regretting the loss of one of these medallions, given at baptism, to part with which is a sin. There is a difference between the medals bestowed upon male and female children, but we are not learned enough to know in what it consists. At breakfast next morning we counted up our expenses of the past day, and found that the Peterhoff expedition had cost above six pounds.

Having only a few days more to spend in St. Petersburg, we determined to devote this time to sight-seeing. To begin with, we passed an hour in the Kertch collection, walked through the long galleries containing the valuable and endless collection of engravings, and then drove to the Academy of Sciences, a handsome building in the Vassili Ostrof, founded by

Peter the Great, our first object there being to see the elephant. There is in reality, however, a very small portion of the skeleton remaining, the tusks and all the ribs but nine having been borrowed from another animal, not even a descendant. It seems a pity to have restored him in this fashion. When discovered by some poor fishermen on the banks of the Lena, his flesh was so perfectly preserved by the intense cold, that it became a prey to bears. He is smaller than the elephants of the present era, and the hair still attached to the ear and the remains of the skin are curious, as hair is altogether wanting on the skin of the elephant of these days. It is thick and coarse, like the fibre of cocoa-nut, and has assumed the reddish colour seen in the hair of a mummy. Some *savans* imagine that it is not a full-grown animal.

The rhinoceros, supposed to be of the same epoch, is better preserved, the skin of the head and feet being almost complete. A dark substance, found in the hollow of one of the teeth of the latter animal, has been analyzed, and pronounced to be the fibre of fir-twigs, the remains of his last meal. We saw also the head of a lady preserved in spirits, a favourite of the great Peter's, a ghastly sight. We then left the department of natural history for that of

coins and antiquities; and after a cursory examination of these we passed into an adjoining room, in which there was a collection of figures clad in native costumes, and surrounded by their peculiar instruments of husbandry—types of the various races to be found in the Russian dominions.

We did not enter the library, but leaving the island, we crossed to the English Quay, by the Nicholas Bridge, and drove to the arsenal, which is close to the Taurida Palace, an immense pile of yellow and white stucco, built by Catherine II. for her favourite Prince Potemkin. It was at one time enriched by works of art, paintings, sculpture, and china, but it has been despoiled, and its walls now shelter ladies of quality too infirm to retain their offices at Court.

On presenting ourselves at the arsenal, in front of which trophies of cannon are ranged, we were taken in charge by a sergeant, a tall man, as stiff as a poker, in a long coat of the orthodox grey, who would have been a capital guide, if we could have understood one word he said. As it was, he held forth to Louis, who translated what was told him into French. Amongst other relics there was an immense flag, made of numerous pieces of silk, on which

was painted a mediæval representation of the Last Judgment. The good were on the right, rejoicing in the agonies of their suffering brethren, from whom they were separated by a body of priests. This banner had belonged to the celebrated Streltsi corps, disbanded by Peter the Great. Amongst the numerous weapons of distinction, is a remarkable revolver, and two revolving batteries, made by order of Peter. A strange erection, half-carriage, half-platform, the car of Shuvaloff, stands in the middle of the hall. It was used at pageants, and was furnished with flags, kettle-drums, all sorts of military trophies, and an automaton coachman. Two men on horseback, one of whom is clad as a Chinese warrior, represent the outriders of the Empress Elizabeth.

We examined with great interest a most primitive little vehicle, used by Peter for measuring the roads. A tiny box, on the lid of which is painted a landscape, contains a machine which marks the distance. The carriage has a sort of skeleton appearance, which gives it some resemblance to a bicycle. Our stern sergeant's pet curiosity was an immense double eagle, formed of gun-flints, pistols, bayonets, and sword-blades; but in our eyes the most interesting object in the museum was

a leather-covered chair, with a low back, which curved round—"the stool of Stenka Razin." This was the throne from which the great robber administered justice. Four large pistols on each side were ready to his hand, to shoot without mercy the victims brought before him. Near to it is a staff, studded with nails, with which he kept his band in order.

Walking a few hundred yards, we came to the Museum of Imperial carriages, the walls of which were hung with fine tapestry, brought from the Taurida Palace. Some of the pieces are of Russian manufacture, and were made in an atelier founded by Peter the Great. In these museums the foreigner realizes what a wonderful man that monarch must have been. Nothing seems to have escaped the grasp of his mind, which flew from ship-building to weapons of war, from religion and politics to theatres, paintings, and sculpture. Alas! his attempt at establishing a rival Gobelin died a natural death, in the reign of his daughter! The collection of carriages is very extensive—nearly all made in London, Paris, or Vienna. They are large, cumbersome, and overlaid with gilding, imitation precious stones, and grotesque carving. The French are the most admirable, as first-rate artists were employed upon the deco-

rations. On many of the panels there are charming landscapes, groups of figures, and allegorical subjects from the pencils of Watteau, Boucher, and Gravelot.

There are also sedan-chairs, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and incrusted with precious stones; as well as sledges of various forms —swans, peacocks, and dragons being the most popular. One sledge of vast size—the masquerade sledge—represents St. George and the Dragon, the numerous heads and tails of the latter peeping out in all directions; the scales formed of thin plates of metal. In the midst of all this splendour stands one humble and travel-stained vehicle, made by the hands of Peter himself, who used it frequently, and for the last time on a journey to Archangel, where it remained until Alexander I. caused it to be forwarded to St. Petersburg. A leathern trunk, strapped on behind, contained the Czar's simple wardrobe, his change of linen, and his food. The windows were glazed with little squares of mica. This museum, of which many of the carriages are still in use, is attached to the Royal stables, which, in Winter, contain three hundred horses; but in Summer they are scattered about—some in Moscow, others in various Royal residences.

The Ecole des Mines is said to contain the rarest collection of minerals existing. In order to visit it we had again to cross to the Vassili Ostrof. We were first shown the models of the Siberian mines, and the manner of working them. The lenses of crystals in the rooms above are exceedingly beautiful; some are very large, and they vary much in colour. We saw specimens of brown, yellow, green, lilac, pink, and even blue, the latter being considered almost unique. The rude lumps of silver, copper, malachite, and lapis lazuli are very valuable, but only models of the gold nuggets are exhibited, the originals being stored away in fire-proof safes. They are believed to be worth £10,000, one single specimen being priced at £1,000. The innumerable ores it would require the knowledge of a *savan* to appreciate. We thought that the finest production in the museum was a cube of some highly-polished substance which came from Labrador. It stood about a foot high, and had some resemblance to opal, but it reflected lights of red, green, and orange. It contained minute bits of mica, and in a dull light might have been overlooked as a piece of granite. We were unable to learn what it was called. There was no catalogue, and when Louis asked the guide he only shook his head.

We got into the carriage intending to call at the photographer's, and pay a visit to the bankers; but "*l'homme propose*," and we had not proceeded far when off flew the wheel. We got out, and held a consultation amidst a gathering crowd of tall, bearded men, tiara-crowned nurses, Cossack soldiers, whose grey coats were decorated on each side with rows of cartridge-pouches, and *gamins* in kaftans and top-boots. A drosky was hailed, but perceiving our distressed condition, the Isvostchik was extortionate. The fear of rivalry, however, induced him to lower his demands. My companion was hoisted into the little seat, and drove off to the Bellevue, while the disabled carriage limped slowly away, leaving Louis and myself to cross the Michael Bridge on foot. It was thronged with vehicles and people, and the broad, turbid Neva, flowing rapidly through the arches, presented a busy scene.

CHAPTER VI.

Pleasant Surprise—Gallery of Peter the Great—Interesting Relics—Siberian Marbles and Jasper—Malachite—The Orloff Diamond—The Imperial Crown—The Tsaritsa's National Costume—Death-Chamber of the Emperor Nicholas—Russian Civilization—The Imperial Library—Collection of Manuscripts—Caricatures—Autograph Letters—The Firkowicz Manuscript—Great Bell of St. Isak's—The Marriage Ceremony.

A PLEASANT surprise awaited me on my return home. A superb chain of amber was thrown round my neck, each bead the size of a large olive, and from it was suspended a cross and tassel. The colour was of the purest primrose, and its value was enhanced by its slightly clouded appearance, which cannot be imitated. My companion had taken advantage of her liberty to search the shop of the Persian, where she had found some pretty things, and brought away the malachite frames so despised by Monsieur de G——. Too much fatigued to

go out in the evening, we settled down to accounts and letter-writing, and longing for English news, sent Louis to procure, if possible, a *Times*. He returned with an unsullied copy. It appears that if foreign papers contain any article disapproved of by the censorship, they are not stopped, but the obnoxious part is covered with black paint.

We were quite ready in the morning, when Monsieur de G—— arrived to escort us to the gallery of Peter the Great, a special permission, or the presence of some one in authority being necessary, in order to obtain admittance. This gallery connects the Hermitage with the Winter Palace, and contains a number of articles made or used by the great Czar, as well as a quantity of Royal *bric-à-brac*. A life-sized figure of Peter in a sitting posture, mount guard over a variety of his personal property—tools, books, telescopes, instruments, arms, and sticks. It is attired in a suit of grey cloth, covered with straggling blue flowers, embroidered by the hands of his Catherine, and worn, it is said, upon a variety of festive occasions. Amongst the many effigies and portraits of Peter, is a most curious mask in wax, taken from life. It has fierce glass eyes, black hair, a moustache, and presents a most life-like appearance. It

was presented by Peter to Cardinal Valentini, and was sold by Prince Torlonia to Russia, not long ago. A war-steed, the famous Danish hound of which we read, and some smaller pets, are stuffed, and placed in groups against the wall; and there is a quaint little figure in wood, dressed in straw bonnet and chintz gown, a model of Peter's buxom Dutch landlady. The jewelled fans, watches, and snuff-boxes are numerous and beautiful. Amongst the latter there is a very interesting relic—the snuff-box presented on the scaffold by Louis XVI. to his valet Cléry. Chinese models and Royal toys were scattered about in all directions. One case contained Catherine's gem-bedecked walking-sticks; and amongst them reposed an umbrella, which had been presented to her by the good people of Tula. The fashion of umbrellas had travelled from Persia into Russia; but in the time of Catherine II. they were rarities in England, for it stands recorded that at the commencement of the last century there was only one in the University of Cambridge, and that was let out at so much an hour. Potemkin's plume glittered with brilliants; but was almost outshone by the jewels on that of Suwaroff. There were two English cups of different epochs—one dated from the time of the Anglo-

Saxons, and made of silver, well wrought; the other, in glass, bore the name and armorial bearings of Anne of Clèves. There is a large Japanese collection, amongst which stands a fine pair of vases of Russian manufacture, to which an amusing notice is affixed: "These vases were sent by the Emperor Alexander I. as a present to the Tycoon, but by him returned, with the announcement that it was impossible for the Tycoon to accept a present from an inferior." A number of Royal pocket-books, stated to contain notes and autographs, would have been well worth seeing, had not their contents been strictly guarded from the touch of the profane. There is also a large case of rings in this museum, which is worthy of examination.

On leaving, we passed into the picture-galleries, wishing to become acquainted with the Siberian marbles and jaspers, magnificent vases and tazzas, mounted on pedestals of the same material, placed down the middle of each room. They are very magnificent, beautiful in form, rich in colour and variety—the most precious being in lapis lazuli. But the palm of beauty must be given to the rose-coloured jasper, the colour of which is lovely, and flecked with grains of black. The mala-

chite was too garish, but contrasted well with the violet jasper; and some of the porphyry was exceedingly handsome. One description which greatly struck our fancy was in hue like the most glossy grey satin; but we saw none of the ribbon jasper, which we had so much admired in the private apartments. Monsieur de G—— had been unable to get a ticket of admission to see the Crown jewels, which were kept in the Winter Palace, in a part unfortunately undergoing repair.

We were loth to leave St. Petersburg without a peep at the Orloff diamond; and Louis advised that we should drive to the residence of the Administrator of the Palaces, and endeavour to get an order. We did so, but applied in vain. "It was impossible, the palace was undergoing repairs." So we determined to see what a little bribery could effect. Bribery is all-powerful with Russian officials, we had heard. The carriage was judiciously stopped a little way from the entrance to the Winter Palace, and Louis set off to negotiate. He returned shortly. "Would we give three rubles?" (about ten and sixpence.) Joyfully consenting, we were conducted by a *sous-officier* of the Golden Guard through endless stone-vaulted corridors, and were desired to wait in the great hall. Its

long tier of windows look out upon the Neva; and wide flights of low marble steps sweep up in the middle, and branch off from the corners. Now it looked cold, dreary, and deserted, but on a gala night it is said to be brilliant in the extreme, spread with crimson, draped with satin, lighted *au jour* by thousands of candles, and transformed into a tropical garden, with rich velvety vegetation and highly-perfumed flowers. Four of the Golden Guards at last arriving, we were marched through another quarter of a mile of corridors, at the end of which we reached a stone chamber, with unplastered walls, furnished with four wooden stools for the soldiers, and rows of glass-covered stands, secured by locks, as well as by the Royal seal. There in the middle, placed in a sloping position, was the sceptre of all the Russias, tipped by the Orloff diamond. Of course we were disappointed—the sceptre resembles a gold poker; and the "mountain of light" which we had pictured to ourselves as big as a walnut, with a haze of glory surrounding it, was no bigger than a hazel nut. But for all that it was brilliant, clear, and beautiful. It is slightly flat in front, and pointed behind, and perfectly symmetrical in shape. It is said to have a slight yellow hue, but that was not

perceptible in the somewhat obscure chamber.

Many are the histories attached to this stone. Some believe it to have been part of an immense brilliant which was cut into three; but the most likely supposition appears to be that it formed the eye of an idol, and was stolen from a temple near Trichinopoly. It was sold, re-sold, and sold again, each time at a higher rate; and refused by Catherine, on account of its enormous price. It was bought at last by Prince Potemkin, and presented by him to his Royal mistress, the price paid to the vendor—an Armenian merchant of the name of Sazareff—being 450,000 silver rubles, a life annuity of 2,000, and a patent of nobility. The Orloff diamond weighs a little above eight carats—more than the Koh-i-noor before it was cut; but the Russian diamond has in it a slight flaw, and the English brilliant is considered to be the most valuable.

The dazzling splendour of the Czar's crown is not to be described. In shape it resembles a patriarchal mitre; the band which encircles the head is formed of large stones of the purest water, and from it spring four arches of brilliants, which, meeting at the top, terminate in one huge sapphire of the deepest, clearest, richest blue. That of the empress is almost as

valuable, and much more beautiful. There are numberless other jewels; a necklace of almond-shaped diamonds, twenty-two in number, with a pendent formed of fifteen, is said to be the most valuable in Europe. But we were better able to appreciate a diadem, the spikes of which were alternately tipped with diamonds and pearls. The latter were perfectly oval and slightly tinged with pink, just the hue which the sinking sun throws on a snow-peak.

This enormous display of wealth left feelings of wonder rather than of pleasure upon our minds, and perhaps we secretly admired the Tsaritsa's national costume more than anything in the room. It consisted of a black velvet cap, and a vest of the same material, with a kaftan reaching to the knee, and is embroidered with the most charming patterns in brilliants. The girdle was superb, terminating in pendent chains and tassels of diamonds; it is worn occasionally at popular balls. It was pleasant to be able to examine these things at our leisure. The Golden Guard sat by with stolid faces and motionless figures, and we could not help comparing this attitude with the urgent appeals to "pass on, ladies and gentlemen, if you please," which in England greet the visitor who wishes to obtain a peep at the Crown

jewels. But then the Golden Guard had accepted tea-money; and how indignantly a "British beef-eater" would have rejected such a bribe!

On leaving the stone chamber, we were handed over to a stern serjeant clad in orthodox grey, who proposed to conduct us to the room in which the Emperor Nicholas expired. Again we traversed a labyrinth of passages. The small ante-chamber and room we came to were as simple as possible. The Czar's bedroom contains little more than an iron bedstead, on which lay folded his grey military cloak, a little finer in material, but otherwise precisely resembling that worn by our soldier guide; a leathern-covered table, two or three chairs, the simplest of toilet appurtenances, and a picture of the Virgin and Child. What sufferings that small room had witnessed! The Emperor was ill of influenza when he received his death-blow—the news of the reverses in the Crimea. That same evening he took to the bed from which he never again rose; suffering no one to approach him until he was positively dying, with the single exception of an old and attached servant, who from time to time renewed the barley-water with which the Emperor sought to relieve his burning thirst. In Russia

dark things are hinted respecting this fatal illness, but there is probably no foundation for the stories which got abroad. This Czar appeared to have a weakness for pocket-handkerchiefs, of which we counted five; but scarcely smiled as we did so, for the room is full of memories, and many of them very sad ones.

The Russians have almost discovered a royal road to learning. Utterly ignorant at a period when other nations were far advanced in knowledge, and had established systems of education, they at last became suddenly aware of their ignorance, and, aided by foreigners and a few travelled men, made great efforts to place themselves on a level with more advanced nations. It cannot be said yet, however, that the Russians, as a body, are a well-educated people. The monastic clergy may be learned, but real civilization can only advance gradually; and many people think that Peter's forcing system merely produced an outward semblance of it, covering over a vast substratum of barbarism. The Imperial library, however, is a proof of what can be done in less than a century. It contains above 800,000 volumes, and 20,000 MSS. The nucleus of the collection was brought from Poland in 1794. In the beginning of this

century, a second collection of MSS. from the same country was added; some of them of great interest, being part of the secret archives of France. Thrown out of the windows of the royal palaces in 1794, by an infuriated mob, they were sold on the spot to the highest bidder, who happened to be a Polish gentleman. When we visited the library, we were, along with several other people, first conducted to the upper rooms, the librarian explaining the different objects of interest in Russian. Seeing, however, that we ceased to listen, he asked, in French, if we were strangers, and went on to say that, if we would amuse ourselves till he had finished his round, he would return and conduct us over the building at our leisure. Meanwhile he advised us to examine the MSS., placed in cases under glass, and the engravings with which the walls were covered. Before leaving, however, he drew our attention to a MS. which he held in his hand, of which the gilt proved the antiquity. The writing was very perfect, and believed to have been that of the Empress Theodora, who lived in the ninth century. The marginal notes were in silver, a style very rare; the metal, being discoloured, had assumed a coppery hue.

Left to ourselves, we found ample amusement. Many of the illustrated MSS. were Per-

sian, and in some we noticed a peculiarity which had been pointed out by a friend, part of whose unrivalled collection of Persian works—which have now, alas! perished by fire—we had seen. Some of the faces were scratched out. It seems that such disfigurements are not rare; it often occurs to the principal personage in a story; generally the wicked hero suffers, and this is the way in which some highly moral reader manifests his displeasure. But this practice was not confined to the East; it was a mediæval custom. In our own country, during two centuries, there is scarcely an existing illuminated MS. which portrays Thomas à Becket in which the martyr's head has not been treated in the same manner. Some of the writing was most beautiful, being perfectly clear, however minute, and the delicate tracery of animals and flowers was exquisitely represented.

The walls of the first room were covered with coarse wood engravings, curious views of towns, and strange costumes. Among the former was a sketch of St. Petersburg in its infancy, a queer little Dutch town, rising out of a swamp, in the centre of which was Peter's still existing wooden church. A second chamber was lined with engraved portraits of Peter, of

which there are nearly five hundred. There he stands, as skipper of "the little grandsire," in an infinite variety of costumes. He is dressed as a Tartar, a soldier, a carpenter, a sailor, a Dutchman, an Englishman; but in very few are any of the insignia of royalty to be found; and wonderfully fierce he looks under all circumstances. There are two portraits of his second queen, which are very rare.

The collection of caricatures is exceedingly amusing, especially to the visitor who has a fair knowledge of Russian history. The Russians have a keen sense of humour, appreciable to English folk because it is akin to their own sense of the ludicrous; there is none of the *triste* wit which emanates from France or Italy, consisting of big heads on shrunken bodies, large noses, and wide mouths. The French caricatures appeal to the mirth or fears of an infant, the English and Russian to the lively imagination of a man. Napoleon I. and the historical *redingote grise* are held up to ridicule in two hundred different ways, worthy of *Punch's* palmy days; nor are the unpopular Russian commanders of his day overlooked. In one, a skit upon the unpopular Tchichakoff, General Kutusoff is represented holding the end of a long net, and Napoleon, in the form of a

hare, is slipping out of the other end, which is held by Tchichakoff, who exclaims, "*Je le sauve!*" Again, Tchichakoff is represented as the pike in Kriloff's fable of "The Ant and the Pike." We did not see any of the Crimean caricatures, but were told that they were excellent. When the librarian returned, he took us to see the fine reading-room, added to the building some ten years ago, which is much frequented. The famous manuscript of the New Testament is not shown without a special permission, difficult to obtain.

Amongst some MSS. produced were a Seneca and Cicero, illuminated by John of Bruges. We asked also to be allowed to see the Cairo MS., which contains great part of the Koran in Cufic characters, and which has thrown great light upon the Cufic alphabet; but whether or not we were any the wiser for having seen it, remains a matter of doubt. A couple of large vault-like rooms, on the ground-floor, contain a number of literary curiosities and autographs —amongst the former, a copy of the "Acts of the Apostles," the first book printed in Russia, under the auspices of Ivan IV., who, cruel as he was, was yet a man of progress, and caused a printing-press to be erected in Moscow. The characters are those invented by the first Greek

missionaries, Cyril and Methodius, who composed an alphabet for the yet unwritten Sclavonic language, 863. A Book of Hours, which belonged to Mary Queen of Scots, is scrawled all over with verses and names, and, written across the first page, in a crooked, unsteady manner, are the words, "*Ce livre est à moi, Marie Reyne*, 1558." In the same case is a letter to the King of France, which would take time to decipher. Perhaps the most interesting autograph letter in the English collection is one addressed to a certain Sieur Gregnan, by Henrietta Maria, entreating him to obtain for her permission to visit her husband in England. There is a delicious copy-book which belonged to Louis XIV., the whole page exposed containing the repetition of a single sentence: "*L'hommage est deue aux Roys; ils font ce qu'il leur plait.*" One small room is set aside for Biblical translations, and a little cabinet adjoining contains the writing materials of different ages and countries; but there were no such blade-bones as were used by Mohammed.

Before leaving, we asked our conductor to show us the MSS., written in Hebrew, which belonged to the Firkowicz family, Crimean Jews, members of an ancient settlement of merchants who

have shops in Bakhchisarai, but live in an eyrie above it, called Tchufut Kalé, where their wooden houses, encircling an isolated rock, overhang the precipice. The strongly-walled little town is closed at night by a single gate, the only path leading to it a track cut out of the slippery rock. These people reject part of the Talmud, and tradition declares them to have formed a separate sect in Bokhara, several centuries before the birth of Christ, and as suffering persecution on that account. They followed the Mongols and Tartars from Asia, in the thirteenth century, aud established themselves under the protection of the Khans of the Crimea, from whom they obtained certain privileges on account of their skill in medicine. The earliest of these MSS. dates from the ninth century, and twenty were written before the tenth century. Mr. Mitchell says: "The MSS., so rare that even the British Museum possesses only a single copy, are decidedly the most ancient known." These precious documents are placed in a fireproof room, upon shelves and, to tell the truth, all we saw of them was the red leather with which they were covered.

We left the Imperial library with real feelings of gratitude towards the librarian who had so kindly conducted us over it.

Being Sunday afternoon, there were full vespers at St. Isak's. The voices in this church are selected with care, and are celebrated for their harmonious chaunting. As we approached the sacred edifice the bells rang out to announce the commencement of the ecclesiastical day. According to the Mosaic account, "the evening and the morning were the first day." The ecclesiastical year, unmeddled with by Peter, begins on the 1st of September, the idea being that God created the world at the season when the fruits of the earth were in perfection. The great bell of St. Isak's weighs 216,000 lbs., and contains a considerable mixture of gold and silver. When bells are about to be cast, it is considered a good work to throw money into the seething metal. The christening of a bell is considered a religious ceremony, but in the Eastern church godfathers and godmothers are not provided, as amongst Roman Catholics.

As we entered the vast cathedral the Dostonoy bell stopped. The word "Dostonoy" means "it is worthy," the beginning of the psalm with which vespers commence; and the bell is called the Dostonoy bell, because it rings a summons to this special service. We were pretty well acquainted with the formula, having a small French translation of the different offices. This

little book (which can be obtained at the Russian Cathedral in Paris) gives also some curious particulars respecting the innumerable forms and symbols used in the Russian Church. The ecclesiastical tongue, the Sclavonic, is said to be easily spoken, but exceedingly difficult to spell. We placed ourselves in front of the Ikonostas, and knelt among the people congregated upon the polished steps which led to the Holy of Holies. The worshippers were principally from the lower orders, who do not understand Sclavonic, but most devoutly performed the only duties allotted to them. At one moment they stood erect, and raised their eyes to heaven in fervent prayer; at another, with bended knees, they crossed themselves, bowing their foreheads in deep humility to the cold marble. Not a single glance betrayed absence of mind on the part of the tall, bearded men, the grey-coated soldiers, the groups of women and children; the very smallest among the wee things following the reverent example of their elders, crossed themselves, and bowed their little heads to the dust.

Lights glimmered from behind the fret-work, and, suspended from above, cast a halo round the jewelled headgear of the gorgeously-attired priest, upon whom the royal gates were closed.

He stood, with flowing beard and hair, a most dignified figure, and read a short chapter from his diamond-studded missal; then, returning to the holy place, he knelt in prayer, the chorus swelled forth in deep, rich tones, and the smoke from many censers made the still air misty, and steeped the worshippers in a sleepy, dreamy fragrance. The precious marbles, the golden shrines, the pictured saints, all melted into a maze of glorious colour; one felt lifted above this prosaic world, when, in a moment, the spell was broken, the golden gates unclosed, and the priest, more grandly apparelled than before, slowly advancing with open book, read the prayer for the Imperial family. The people prayed fervently for their Czar; once more the harmony pealed forth, and then all was over, and the crowd dispersed. We alone lingered, longing to penetrate behind that mysterious screen, now closely guarded by the silken curtain, emblematic of the veil of the Temple. The chamber, which the consecrated foot alone may tread, is called the altar; in the midst stands the throne, on which are placed pictures of Christ and of sacred personages, along with a golden box containing the consecrated loaf; a second casket holds the *artemius*, or communion cloth, a piece of linen about fifteen inches

square, which, when it has been consecrated by the Archbishop, the priest who brings it away must wear on his breast during the journey. Without the artemius no altar can be consecrated; it is wrapped in a silken cover, on which is stamped a picture representing the entombment of Christ, each corner being embossed with the head of an Evangelist, and relics sewn into the side which is turned to the East.

The altar is called the Table of Sacrifice. On it are also laid relics and curious instruments, unknown in other than this highly symbolic church—a spear to cleave the bread, and a spoon with which to administer the sacrament, which is done by the priest standing upon the steps leading to the altar. The marriage ceremony cannot be performed if the parties have not attended the sacrament during the year; and this applies even if one of them is a Christian of another creed. A chair of state is placed within the sacred precincts, as if expecting the immediate presence of the High Priest, the Czar; another is prepared for the Metropolitan, or Archbishop. Ordination of priests takes place within the altar; marriages and burials in the middle of the church, with the Royal doors open. Confession is made obligatory by Government once a year to all *employés;* if neglected,

there is a certain reduction of pay. It takes place behind a screen in any corner, the penitent being face to face with the priest. But it differs from that of the Romish Church. Repentance alone suffices to obtain remission of sins. In the Eastern Church the priest who gives absolution says, "May the Lord absolve thee!" in the Romish Church he says, "*I* absolve thee." Anyone leaving the Russian Church is considered to be not only forsaking his God, but becoming a traitor to his country.

We walked round the magnificent cathedral for the last time, paused for a moment under the vast portico, to admire its perfect proportions and the beauty of its unrivalled columns, descended the steps of polished granite, and turned towards the Nevsky Prospekt. The shops were beginning to open. On a Sunday they are shut during the services of the church, else the only observable difference in the day seems to be that the dresses are gayer, the people all the better for the Saturday's steaming, and the streets filled with pleasure-seekers, who throng the quays and lounge under the trees. The theatres are shut during the hot weather; but there are gaily-illuminated Cremornes and Vauxhalls, where, in the Summer evenings, the gipsies sing. We had a

great wish to hear them; and Monsieur de G—— half offered to take us, adding, at the same time, that they were scarcely places for ladies, so we declined. In the evening our friend came to bid adieu—he had work on the morrow which would not allow of his escorting us to the railway—and we thanked him heartily for his good offices. The dearth of sight-seers in Russia renders many places difficult of access, and the stranger absolutely requires the help of a resident, as well as the services of a commissionaire. The great stumbling-block is the character in which the language is written. French is much spoken in the higher circles; but as the national literature has increased, the people have gradually ceased to make use of a foreign tongue, it is less understood now than in the reign of Catherine II., and is seldom heard in either the hotels or shops of St. Petersburg.

Rising early, we went down to the Hermitage, to see once more the "Repose in Egypt," the "Dance of the Boy Angels," and two or three other favourite pictures, and to wonder for the last time over the warlike remains of the Scythian kings and the more delicate treasures of the Greek priestess. We were well known to the *custodi*, and the scarlet-clad porter handed

us our parasols with a benevolent smile, which ripened into a broad grin as he pocketed double the usual amount of tea-money. Having still a little time to spare, we paused before the most brilliant shops, although now well acquainted with the tempting objects exhibited, took one turn more in the Gostinnoi Dvor, and, turning into our hotel, which well deserved the name of Bellevue, bade a long adieu to the Nevsky Prospekt. Half an hour afterwards, having distributed tea-money with more or less liberality (the peasant received a double share), we got into the carriage, Louis mounted the box, and, half sorry, half glad, turned our backs upon the splendid Imperial city.

CHAPTER VII.

Railway Journey to Moscow—Russian Railway Guard—Refreshment Room—Manufacture of Bells at Valdai—Travelling through the Woods—Krukova—New Jerusalem Monastery—Hôtel Billet and Hôtel Billat—Entrance to Moscow—Settled in the Hôtel Duseaux—Dinner for One or Two?—First Impressions of the Ancient Muscovite Capital—St. Basil's Cathedral—The Kremlin—The Bells of Moscow—The Moskvaretsk Bridge—Vast New Cathedral.

IT is twenty hours by rail from St. Petersburg to Moscow, and, bent upon enjoying the journey, we got Louis to secure a *coupé* for our separate use. The platform of the station was thronged with people, but a strong wooden railing, placed a couple of yards from the carriages, separated the gazers from the passengers—no bad plan for either party, as it enables people to enjoy the conversation of their friend up to the moment of departure. Before entering the carriage we walked down

the line, and Louis pointed out the shelves, which could be let down if necessary, converting the carriage into something like a cabin on board ship. There are no second-class carriages attached to the mail-trains, and consequently none of the long saloons, arranged on the American plan, with stoves and smoking-rooms. We made Louis happy by presenting him with a handful of Swedish money, and promising to recommend him to friends, which we could conscientiously do, having found him intelligent, honest, and most obliging. He was very anxious to accompany us, but we felt quite able to manage for ourselves; and a third person on a journey of some thousands of miles would have greatly increased the expense, Astrakhan alone being 2,300 miles from the capital.

It was four o'clock, in a delightful afternoon in July, when we glided from the dim station into the sunlit plain, and we stretched our necks out of the window, as anxious to catch a glimpse of St. Isak's golden dome as if we had not seen it daily for the last three weeks. A few minutes, and then two or three star-bespangled cupolas, golden crosses, and aspiring campaniles, were all that rose above the belt of wood encircling the town, and we gave

ourselves up to the pleasure of passing through a strange country. It was a little above four hundred miles to Moscow, and the road is very solitary, being cut through virgin forest. Flat in the extreme, it was, nevertheless, exceedingly pretty. The trees were green and beautiful—principally oak and beech, and out of the thickets peeped log huts, raised above the ground, and the brown bark clinging to the wooden walls was mellowed by grey and yellow lichens. The dark woods were doubly delightful after the fatigues of a strange city like St. Petersburg, teeming with life, and full of objects which allowed the mind no rest. The first station at which we stopped was Kolpino, a town with belching chimneys, where guns are cast and anchors hammered; and soon after we crossed a broad swift stream, the river Valkoff, hastening through green meadows to mingle its waters with those of Lake Ladoga.

It was soon out of sight, and on we flew between two leafy walls, here and there coming upon some spot cleared to warm St. Petersburg, and enliven the darkness of its dismal Winter. Occasional tracks cut through the forest wandered away to some solitary village, and we wondered what sort of life might be led by its inhabitants. A single span of iron

bridges over the river Msta, which rises in the Valdai Hills. At the next station our guard, to whose care we had been confided, made signs that we were to get out—eating was going on.

The said guard was a peculiar-looking individual. Tartar, from his sly eyes and lank hair. He wore a flat cap, smothered in coarse sable; besides which, he had a muff of the same material tied round his waist. Entering the handsome refreshment-room, we found preparations for dinner, and, taking possession of a small table, hailed a chelovek in pink gingham, and made signs that we wished to be served. With a salaam and the usual sluches, he disappeared, returning in rotation with potage, chicken, vegetables, and little jellies full of fruit—a favourite Russian dish. At the end of the repast, the magic word *tchai* produced two glasses, set in silver frames and filled with golden liquid, on which floated fragrant slices of lemon, the first overland tea we had tasted; it was delicate in flavour and very refreshing. Having succeeded in paying without making any serious blunder, we returned to our *coupé*, highly content with the result of our efforts.

The sun was sinking, the evening was delightful, and it was fairly dusk when we next halted; but we got out again, as it was a large

station, and there was a depôt for the work peculiar to the district at Okulofka. It consisted of wood-work, screens, mats, and window-blinds made of thin rods, no bigger than rushes, prettily painted. By the time Valdai was reached, the woods were bathed in the soft light of a moon nearly at its full. Valdai manufactures scythes and sickles; it is an important town, renowned for its bells, and venders were running about with racks, from which small specimens were suspended, ringing out silvery sounds pleasant to the ear. No bells approach those of Russia in size and sweetness of tone; mention is made of them in the oldest MSS., and the Russians are supposed to have learnt the art of making them from the Scythians, who excelled in their manufacture. They scarcely, however, play so important a part in the Eastern as in the Latin Church; they do not peal for weddings, and no bell tolls for the dead; they tell only when a priest is laid out, and the bishops have little twinkling things on their capes and mantles. The scenery about Valdai must be very pretty; we could distinguish a long chain of swelling hills. In the Valdai Mountains (mountains by courtesy) rise three rivers, the mighty Volga, the Dwina, an important stream, and the Valkhof. At Ostash-

koff every sort of embroidered leather is sold—slippers, harness, belts, saddles, jackets. Torjok work is famous throughout the country, and is made at a town in this province. Even in a Summer night the air of the forest is chilly, so we wrapped our shawls about us, and revelled in the thought that next day we should be in "Holy Moscow." On we flew; the woods were bathed in moonlight, but here and there were dark mysterious spots from which great trees stretched out their weird arms, as if to bar our progress; showers of sparks flew from our engine, and its shrieks might have arisen from the wood-demons. The day had been fatiguing, and, in spite of our desire to keep awake, our eyes would close, and we slept through the short night.

Waking up with a start at Tver, we let down the windows, and inhaled the fresh morning air. The trees themselves must have slept, they looked so fresh and green. Through their branches we saw a smooth blue stream; it was our first acquaintance with a friend who was to bear us on his bosom for many hundred miles. Here the Volga first becomes navigable for steamers—long narrow boats, which are changed for larger ones at Nijni-Novgorod. Tver is prettily situated, and is a town of some

importance. The dome of the cathedral bulged out large and green, but its height was far outstripped by the many-storied bell-tower. A few miles farther on is Krukova, noticeable as the point of departure for the monastery of the New Jerusalem, built by the Russian Luther, the turbulent patriarch Nicon, about the middle of the seventeenth century, after an exact model of the holy sepulchre; but it owed its origin to the Czar Alexis, the father of Peter the Great, who, whilst walking one day in friendly conversation with the patriarch, stopping suddenly short, observed, "What a site for a monastery!—what a beautiful place for a New Jerusalem!" This building is all the more curious as the original church has undergone many alterations since the seventeenth century, which this, its offspring at Voskresensk, has escaped.

Opening a little door at the back of our carriage, we discovered a small toilet apparatus; it was most refreshing to be able to wash our hands after the heat and dust of the journey. Approaching Moscow by this line of railway, no view of the city is to be obtained, as the station is at least a mile and a half from the centre of the town. Managing to get our luggage together, it was placed about a lumbering

old green coach, and, in accordance with Louis' advice, we ordered it off to the Hôtel Billat, feeling *en route* in mortal fear of being set down at the Hôtel Billet, which is all but next door. The streets were wide and dreary, the white dust lay in the road inches thick, and powdered everything a dull grey. Arrived, no sitting-room was to be obtained, but Monsieur Billat offered to give up his own little suite, which was on the ground-floor, and possessed the atmosphere peculiar to rooms much used and never aired. Then, to our dismay, we found that we were in a commercial boarding-house, and should be expected to dine at a table capable of holding fifty people, the linen none of the purest, and the copper vases, once silvered, full of cats' tails and sun-flowers. Tired, dusty, and exhausted, we begged for breakfast, and, after drinking the hot coffee, set to work on Murray and Bradshaw.

Madame Billat, a Swiss, was a pretty, lady-like young woman, dressed in the daintiest of blue muslins (and we were such dusty objects); she was most kind, and begging that we would suit ourselves exactly respecting her rooms, considerately left us to consider our plans. Our reflections ended in our setting off upon separate tours of inspection, and, after puzzling out the streets,

anathematizing the Russian alphabet, which we could make nothing of, asking the way of people whose only reply was a shrug and a stare, and taking turns innumerable, we met again, to agree that Moscow, however holy, was the dustiest, dreariest place we had ever been in—and treacherous, too, for it was all built in curves and circles, in order to entrap unfortunate travellers; but we paid our little bill, arranged to have the luggage sent after us, reclaimed our passport, already stamped Hôtel Billat, bade adieu to Monsieur, warmly thanked Madame, who was in a state of tearful recovery from a bump on the head, received whilst we were away (how it occurred did not appear), and set off to the Hôtel Duseaux, a choice of which we never repented.

It proved to be a very large, well-managed house, a mixture of German and Russian. Our sitting-room had two windows, which looked out upon a wide and somewhat dreary street, of which we obtained a complete view only when we climbed up and sat in the deep window-seats. The many-storied opposite houses had a slightly decayed appearance, as if they might have seen better days, and had sloping roofs, covered with green copper. The room was large, but its size was diminished by a

partition with a door in it, which reached to within a couple of feet of the ceiling. Our suite were supposed to find accommodation in this ante-chamber, but, being absent on leave, we occupied it with cloaks and trunks. The double-bedded room, with its two windows, was very airy, and in the middle of it (pleasant sight!—they must have expected English travellers) there was a large bath of pure cold water, of which we immediately availed ourselves. For this accommodation we arranged to pay nine francs a day; breakfast was to be *à la carte;* the dinners four francs each. We were a little puzzled by the first question asked—"Did we require dinner for one or for two?" "Two—we are two people," we innocently replied. It seems, however, that Russians, under similar circumstances, would have been content to share a single meal. The chamber-maid spoke a few words of German, and was very obliging; the well-appointed waiter who endeavoured to take our orders was a very dark man, probably a true Tartar; but, alas! not a word of anything but Russian did he understand. Sometimes the master had to be summoned—he spoke both French and German—or we got hold of a kind of porter, if he happened to be at home; at others, we took

our chance, and frequently got anything but what we demanded. Ice would be brought instead of tea, and we went through days of distress before we could obtain a slop-basin. Whatever happened, however, the muscles of our chelovek's face never relaxed; he always made the same low bow, whether he understood or not, and quietly uttered the orthodox sentence, "To hear is to obey;" though, as far as we were concerned, dignity would occasionally give way to mirth.

Having succeeded, nevertheless, in making it clear that we required dinner for two, we set off to explore the "holy city," and found that the Hôtel Duseaux formed the corner of a wide street, and a boulevard which was bordered by occasional sickly-looking plantain trees, under which there were some time-worn planks to sit upon. Many-windowed houses, of five and six stories and unequal height, bordered the road on one side, and on the other a high crenellated, white-washed wall, stretched along to a considerable length, and turned a corner in the distance, near where it formed an angle, which was occupied by a watch-tower of singular appearance. It was deeply indented in zig-zags, which were painted in alternate stripes of red,

green, and yellow; it looked more like an erection of coarse pottery than anything else, and was our first introduction to Tartar architecture. Perceiving that a well-worn flight of steps led to an arched door in the wall, we passed up them and through it into a narrow passage, with a book-stall on one side, and fruit on the other. This led into a long street, which ought to have been straight, as it hugged the wall; but as nothing is straight in Moscow, the road curved about in the most inconvenient manner. There were common shops on each side, and here and there the front of a church was seen. One was under repair, and the vivid green background was relieved with arabesques, which were being carefully picked out in white and red; and the effect, though strange, was good. A turn to the left, and we entered one of the wide corridors of the Gostinnoi Dvor, which is perfectly different in its arrangement from that of St. Petersburg; but so anxious were we to obtain a view of the Kremlin that we passed through, without stopping, into the wide area between the Kitai-Gorod, or Chinese town, as it is called, and the high red dentellated walls of the Kremlin.

Here, however, one object filled us with such astonishment that it almost took away our

breath and we stood rooted to the spot. The wildest imagination would fail to picture such a building as the Vassili Blajennoi (St. Basil); not all the pork chops devoured by Fuseli could have provoked the sleeper to dream of such a church. It is certainly the most eccentric pile in Europe, and utterly unlike anything we had ever seen. It has a coloured spire, so twisted that it is impossible to tell whether it is in immediate danger of falling, or whether its crooked appearance is the result of an optical illusion. Then it has eleven bulb-shaped domes, each surmounted by the crescent and the cross, and secured by the usual streaming chains. One dome was larger than the others, which were of different sizes, and not placed symmetrically. They cropped up anywhere, and were either deeply indented or patterned in bold relief. These were picked out in the most gorgeous colours; there was nothing delicate in the tracery, which was, on the contrary, coarse and solid, and so all the more effective. One had a twisted design, red, on a green ground (red and green predominated); another, all prickly angles, yellow and black; a third was ornamented with scales of blue and crimson; a fourth was in quarters like a melon. There were outside flights of stairs,

which appeared to lead to nothing; doors which were unattainable, and would have been all the better for the steps; and slits of windows, which the crows alone could have found useful. No wonder that its barbarous appearance struck even the calm eye of Napoleon, who is said to have paused when he first saw it, and then to have cried out to his staff, "Have that mosque pulled down." Fortunately for those who delight in fantastic objects, no one had time to execute the order; and it was one of the many buildings left unscathed by the great fire.

The Cathedral of St. Blajennoi was built by Ivan the Terrible, partly in memory of a mad hermit, and partly to commemorate a great victory over the Tartars. It may perhaps be the copy of some building of the period at Kazan. The architect, who adopted the Tartar design (an Italian), is said to have been deprived of his eyes, for fear he should execute another work of greater merit than the wicked Ivan's pet church. It has been called by some "a fitting monument of a mad Czar, and his mad reprover (the hermit)." Day after day did Ivan sit to see it raised, watching the labour of hundreds of workmen, who were kidnapped from Lübeck. There are some Tartar build-

ings at Agra and Delhi, which greatly resemble this St. Basil at Moscow. Passing through the sacred gateway, we stood in the Kremlin. A large tract of ground stretches in front of its churches, palaces, monasteries, and public buildings—a rich group, which our unpractised eyes could only understand as one splendid whole. Elevated on a high plateau, the terrace is protected by an iron railing; and as we leant over it the greater part of the city of Moscow was spread out at our feet. It was a moment never to be forgotten. No other city in the world can present such a *coup-d'œil.* We had watched "the sunset's glow," bathing Rome in a flood of glory, breathed the fresh morning air on the heights above Granada and its villa-scattered Vega, looked down upon the Roman arches and deep gorges of Constantine, but in curiosity and grandeur the sacred city of the Czar outstripped them all. Our hearts swelled as we gazed down upon church-covered Moscow.

The steep green rampart which we stood upon terminated in a broad gravel walk, bordered by trees (it is a city of trees), and bounded by high dentellated walls of red brick, with many a watch-tower and great massive gateway, built by an Italian, somewhat after the

manner of his own city, Bologna. Beyond flowed the Moskva, murmuring under bridges in a Summer humour, and separating the district of the Kremlin from the bulk of the city. There are upwards of six hundred churches and chapels in Moscow, and three times as many burnished crosses, reared on high, flash in the sun, and tip with light the gilded, silvered, and star-bespangled domes. Belfries of many stories rose above the sacred edifices, as if to protect them. Numbers of monasteries and religious houses, shut out from the world by groves of sombre hue, looked stern and grim; but most of the private dwellings had gardens and thickets of verdure, and the universal tea-green of the roofing seemed to blend all colours together into one harmonious tint. But to understand Moscow it must be seen, no description can picture it truly, no photograph can render its colouring. To our right, the river came curving under steep woody heights, which were sprinkled with large white houses with towers—charming abodes; to the left it wound serpent-like along the flat plain until, many a mile away, it diminished to a mere thread, and was merged in the blue horizon. The atmosphere was balmy, clear, and perfectly still—not a sound was to be

heard louder than the coo of a pigeon or the hum of an insect.

We were plunged in dreamy reverie, when suddenly from the churches rang out the sound of a thousand bells, their silvery notes making the air musical, and calling the pious to the opening service of the day. The far-famed Moscow bells are very delightful; and we crept down a narrow path, and sat in the shade, to enjoy their harmony. Some were loud and clanging, others deep and sonorous; and there were baby-bells, which tinkled softly. But all were pure in tone, and charmed the ear.

We lingered long—the perfect repose was very pleasant, and prepared us for a walk, which we prolonged by passing from the *enceinte* of the fortress (Kremlin is the Tartar word for fortress), and rounding its eastern side, where lay a deserted spot, used occasionally as a cattle and hay market. This space was once occupied by "the house-market." Everything is now to be bought ready-made in Russia, excepting perhaps houses; but, in the olden times, they also were to be had at a moment's notice, and were often required, for formerly the town being entirely built of wood, whole streets would suddenly be consumed by fire. An odd accident happened to one of these erections in the

youthful days of Catherine II. One night she and the Court were fast asleep, when the house began to move. Situated on a slope, the snow behind bore heavily upon it, and the whole mass began to glide gently down. Nothing more serious, however, seems to have occurred upon the occasion than a ludicrous scene of dismay, and the exhibition of some absurd demi-toilets.

Resting for a short time after dinner, as soon as the sun declined we set out again, map in hand, and full of zeal, realizing the delight of being in a new town, at liberty to find our own enjoyment, and grope out at leisure all that was strange and curious. We determined to obtain a general view of the Kremlin from the opposite side of the river. The Moskvaretsk Bridge was crowded with people, and the flocks of blue pigeons made us quite giddy, as the holy birds rose in clouds and whirled round our heads. Facing the bridge stood a quadrangular building, of such important appearance that we were quite disappointed to learn that it was a monster hotel—one frequented entirely by Russians. Next to it rose a very beautiful Gothic church, in white marble, evidently quite new. We could not learn the creed to which it belonged, but believed it to be Roman Catholic.

The walls of the Kremlin are nearly triangular, taking as the base of the triangle the southern side, which is built along the river. A noble pile the buildings form—the great Italian palace, the many-domed cathedrals of the Assumption, the Archangel Michael, and the Annunciation, mingled with monasteries, convents, [public buildings, and private palaces—the whole adorned by curious towers, varying greatly in dimensions and architecture. From the spot where we stood we counted thirty, some Gothic, others Tartar; and nothing could be more picturesque than the effect, along with the high red battlemented walls, which embrace an area of two square English miles, and are guarded in many parts by strongly fortified gates. Above all soared the giant tower of Ivan Veliki, which rises higher than any other building in the Kremlin.

We had a fine view of that part of Moscow which is built on the traditionary seven hills. It is not possible to trace them, but the buildings rise tier above tier, in the form of a crescent. Re-crossing the river by the stone bridge, we were close to the new cathedral, the Temple of the Saviour. This vast edifice is still incomplete, although commenced in 1812, in order to commemorate the ruin of the French army, "the

defeat of the thirty nations," as the Russians please to say, on the anniversary of which event (the evacuation of Moscow by the French) there are grand ceremonies in this cathedral, the service commencing with the verse, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning!" and concluding with the Epistle, "Who through faith subdued hosts, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the alien." The temple is built of very fine white sandstone, quarried near Moscow. The interior is not yet fitted up, but it contains some fine specimens of marble. The effect of the dome, which is not bulb-shaped, but in its form resembling that of St. Isak's, is positively dazzling, being covered with the brightest gold. When lit up by the midday sun it stands out from the ultramarine sky like a glaring mass, which it is painful to the eye to dwell upon. "God with us," is the motto sculptured over the door of this great edifice.

The ground at the foot of the Kremlin's western wall is laid out in extensive gardens. There are not many flowers, but their place is supplied by grassy terraces, broad promenades, shady alleys, and bits of turf, with groups of people dotted about. We took possession of a bench, and watched the nurses and children,

whose bright raiment contrasted with the somewhat sombre foliage. They made the air ring with shouts and laughter. Three little girls were playing with their brothers, miniature men, with crimson shirts, kaftans, and top-boots. One wee thing was arrayed in pink and silver, another in saffron, and the tall, square, blue-eyed nurses wore handkerchiefs of gaudy hue pinned across their ample bosoms, and red petticoats. How well they must look when the snow is on the ground, for even their Winter garments are gay.

Long lines of buildings rise above the fortress wall; the back of the treasury and arsenal occupying the whole extent of the western side of the Kremlin. In front these buildings are cased with fine white stone, and appear new and bright; but they are whitened sepulchres, for nothing can be more battered and stern in appearance than their aspect from the back, and the irregular slits of windows, carefully barred, tell of times when all was not peace. Before the burning of Moscow, part of the city stood upon the ground now occupied by the Alexander Gardens. Wooden houses stuck like limpets to the old red walls, and the people who inhabited them were so lawless and savage that those of the palace had to be con-

stantly on their guard. We sat until nearly dark, obliged to keep our veils down, for the mosquitoes were most annoying. On leaving the garden, we came out upon one of the finest towers in the Kremlin, built by the same Czar Boris who raised the mighty Ivan Veliki. This tower had a large square base, like a donjon keep. From its ramparts sprang three tiers of terrace-chambers, decreasing in size; and above them was a structure of Gothic arches, which supported a lofty tower. The tint of the old grey stone and red brick was subdued and charming, adding greatly to the picturesque effect.

The wide, straggling boulevard into which we turned was terribly dusty. At every step we raised a cloud, and were powdered white before we reached our rooms, when each garment had to be shaken separately out of the window. Our saint was so very small, and placed in a corner so obscure, that at first we imagined him to be altogether absent, but at last, very high up, we discovered a tiny image, and bidding it a sleepy good night, we thankfully lay down in our comfortable beds. The chamber was in a green glow from the early sun which struggled through the blinds, when, roused by the sound of a great scrubbing, we awoke. The noise

came from the next room, where a peasant in a pink shirt, and very little besides, was scrubbing away for dear life, as he did three times every week. He was a miserable little man, not like the one we had left behind us at St. Petersburg, and looked so sickly and poor that we were tempted to give him some copecs—a foolish act, for they were soon claimed as a right; but at last the master of the hotel begged us not to give him anything, as he was amply paid at the bureau.

The morning air being clear and refreshing, we set forth at the sound of bells, determined to peep in at the service in St. Blajannoi, which was celebrated in the so-called crypt, but the grained, vault-like chamber is not underground. When we entered, it was occupied by half a dozen market-people of very devout appearance. The priest was reading part of the Lessons in a monotonous tone, and the sound of the Sclavonic tongue did not seem to us as liquid as that of the Russian, which is a language peculiar for its sweetness. No harsh sound ever falls from the mouth of the Russian. Whether in the markets, in the streets, or amongst the drosky-drivers, the words uttered always fall melodiously upon the ear, and the general manner of these gigantic men is ami-

able and obliging; but they are said to be roused to fury if their few prejudices are assailed. If anyone were thoughtlessly to utter a word reflecting upon their religion, or their Czar, as its great High Priest, his life would not be worth a moment's purchase. The Saint to whom the church is dedicated was half cunning, half idiotic, the latter being a condition reverenced by the Russian. St. Basil, with streaming hair, used to sit perfectly naked at the splendid banquets of the cruel Ivan, and fearlessly reprove him. Even near the end of the seventeenth century, one of these mad hermits shared the board of the reforming Nicon. But this church possesses a double claim upon a devout mind, for a second idiot is buried therein, named John the Big Cap. Is it possible that this grotesque building should have been allotted to them as patron saints in irony?—a kind of wit in which the Russians are remarkably subtle. There is a dark, curious, low-browed sacristy, which we entered when the service was over, containing some ancient eikons and relics, such as St. Basil's chains of penance, and John the Idiot's cap; but we were glad to pass out of the mouldy chamber into the free air outside.

As we wandered round and round St. Basil, our astonishment grew greater the longer we

observed it, and then we sat down upon some moss-covered steps which led up to a stone porch with pretty tracery, utterly out of keeping with the rest of the building, and considered the extensive Krasnaya Ploschad, "red or beautiful place," at our leisure. We were rather inclined to think that it might have taken the name of "red" from the blood which has stained the spot for centuries. It is true that, in Eastern phraseology, the "red" place means the place highly coloured and ornamented—such is the signification of the word Alhambra; but the cases are not parallel. The Alhambra, like the Kremlin, was a fortress enclosed by high walls. The earliest account of this "red place," however, describes it as waste ground, where executions took place, and battles were fought again and again. It has been deluged with Tartar, Polish, and native blood, and was not even enclosed until Helena, the mother of Ivan the Cruel, caused the miserable huts scattered about to be destroyed, built the present Katai Gorod, or Chinese town, and protected the new bazaar by the high white wall through which we had first entered its precincts.

The Katai Gorod is a vast labyrinth of

covered streets, and a most amusing place; but there is nothing Chinese about it, the architecture being as simple as possible. It forms one side of the Krasnaya Ploschad, opposite the wall of the Kremlin. The moat which protected the latter, having been filled up and planted, forms a pleasant and shady walk. The centre of this great oblong place is ornamented by a group in bronze which represents Minin, the cattle-dealer of Nijini Novgorod, urging Pojarski to rise and deliver Moscow from the Poles. It marks the spot where the Poles were repulsed. But the most curious relic of the past is the Lobnoé Mesto. It is a stone erection of circular form, raised a couple of yards from the ground, and encircled by a low wall with a stone coping. Some say that executions took place there, others that it was used as a kind of tribune; but it is certain that in it the terrible Ivan stood and wept when obliged by the Patriarch Philip (Russia's single martyr) to do penance for some deed of peculiar atrocity; and from it the Patriarch read the gospel before the Easter ceremony, when, mounting an ass, which was led by the Czar, and followed by the Boyars and the populace, he passed in proud humility through the sacred

gate and on to the Cathedral of the Assumption. Peter the Great stood in the Red Place, hatchet in hand, hard by the Lobnoé Mesto, and assisted at the massacre of the Streltsi.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Sacred Gateway—The Virgin of Mount Athos—Remarks of Ivan the Terrible—The Gostinnoi Dvor—Bazaar of the Money-Changers—Corridor for the Sale of Ecclesiastical Furniture—Street of the Trunk-makers—The Nicholas Palace—Church of the Assumption—Pride of the Kremlin—Books of the Ignorant—Our Lady of Vladimir—Tombs of the Patriarchs—Coronation of the Czars—Cathedral of the Archangel Michael—The Tomb of Demetrius—Church of the Annunciation.

WE turned away from a place of such awful memories to follow pleasanter associations—those connected with the sacred gateway, the Spaski, or Gate of the Redeemer, which is the principal entrance to the Kremlin. All state processions, since the reign of Ivan III., or the Great, have passed under its portal. It is a beautiful structure of red brick, built by a Milanese in the year 1491. On the great machicolated base stands a massive tower, with

a battlemented terrace, and numerous turrets. In its turn it supports a square church-tower, surmounted by an octagonal base, from which spring eight most elegant Gothic arches, above which arises a lofty spire, tapering until it terminates in a regal crown and the double-headed eagle of Russia, above which waves the sacred emblem of Christianity. This building is rendered holy by an image placed over the door, called the "Redeemer of Smolensk." It accompanied Bojarski's army in the campaign in which he conquered the Poles. Many of these holy pictures, it must be remembered, are sacred to the people from an historical as well as a religious point of view. The calm face of the saint may have looked down upon his country's battefields, and have been the rallying-point from which soldiers have gone forth to conquer. A light burns day and night under this precious eikon, and illuminates the gold casing; but the picture itself is nearly black, and looks like a dark patch, which would have little meaning, did not the horseshoe glory encircling the head catch the eye. The noble will leave his carriage, the citizen his drosky, the peasant his cart, and all will touch the earth with their foreheads, and pray to obtain a blessing from the Holy

Redeemer of Smolensk. All men who pass under this picture must doff their caps and bow their heads—the Czar himself must uncover. A stern grey soldier stands on this spot to see that no Rusko *gamin* fails in rendering reverence due; and woe be to the obstinate Englishman or American whose stiff neck will not bend, who will not remove his wide-awake! Not all the wrath of the free-born Briton, not all the pluck of the stripes and the stars, will enable either of them, in case of contumacy, to pass that little point of glittering steel presented at their breast by the son of the Czar; they must conform, or walk a mile to reach a less sacred gateway, free to heretics.

A small Gothic chapel stands on each side. One of these appears to be disused; but the other is the abode of a very sacred personage, the celebrated Virgin, late of Mount Athos. As did formerly the Bambino of the Ara Cœli, she rides in her own coach when she pays her highly-valued visits to the sick. Her equipage is grander than that of the Czar; the postilions who conduct her six horses must uncover in the hottest sun.* We felt quite jealous, for

* We found afterwards that it is not the Iberian Virgin who occupies the chapel by the Spanski Gate; it is another Holy Mother. The image of the Iberian Virgin is

the sake of our familiar acquaintance, the Bambino, for he was deprived of his coach by a Pope whose displeasure he had incurred, and now, when he goes abroad, he has to make a pounce, and has a right to dislodge the occupant, and take possession of the first vehicle which passes the steps of his church.

Many a convent cupola and curious tower peeps over the hoary old walls of the Kremlin, and, peering above the battlements, is a little Gothic erection—merely a pointed roof, set upon four stout twisted columns. A covered way once led to it from the palace, and along it trotted the wicked old Ivan many a time, and sat down in that droll little box. From it he could gloat over the executions and horrors with which the "red place" abounded, and, seized with frenzy at the sight of blood, he would sometimes rush down, hatchet in hand, pass under the image of the mild Redeemer, and hack and hew at the bodies of the still warm victims. Ivan the Terrible has long since passed away to render his black account, but this little building, which appears like a pleasant Summer-house, remains to bear witness of his ferocity.

placed in a chapel near the door which forms the principal entrance to the Kitai Gorod. This gate is called the Sverski Vorota.

Every quarter of an hour the sweet musical chimes rang from the tower of the Sacred Gate, and were caught up by Ivan Veliki. Often we paused to listen to their harmony, whilst endeavouring to picture to ourselves the scenes of which this spot had been the theatre. It was very quiet; the sparrows chirped and quarrelled in the nooks of old St. Basil's, as sparrows had done for many a year before. Gazing towards the far end of the bloody place, there was scarcely a person to be seen. One or two children, hastening to the shade, made black spots in the sun-scorched ground, and nearly a mile away was a tall Gothic spire and tower, the Nicholsky Gate, by which Napoleon entered and left the Kremlin. He ordered it to be destroyed by gunpowder, and the operations were began, as a great split in the wall still testifies; but they were put a stop to by the miraculous image of St. Nicholas—a fact vouched for by Alexander I., who caused an inscription to that effect to be placed over the entrance.

The noon-day sun was very hot, but we could not forbear giving a few moments to the view from the terrace. The great city looked metallic in the clear atmosphere, the glittering crosses seemed on fire, and the sight was painful to the

eye. We took the earliest opportunity of diving under the cool green thickets which clothed the ancient moat, and on we crept, until there was only a span of sunshine between us and the Chinese town.

The Moscow Gostinnoi Dvor was more to our taste than the Bazaar at St. Petersburg. This one also may be said to be a collection of shops, but they are gathered together under one vast roof, and many are open in the Eastern fashion, from which, however, they differ in being much larger, and arranged principally in the European manner. But in the East buying and selling is a pastime; and the Oriental of good family often leaves the country for the city, and sets up a shop, in order to amuse himself in a quiet way, and become acquainted with the world. Time is nothing to him; and the stranger is at liberty to look over his goods, and take or leave them at his pleasure; only, in the latter case, no parting cup of coffee is offered. In Russia it is very different. Buying, selling, and especially exchanging, are the serious business of life. As everything is to be had at a moment's notice, nothing is bought unless wanted for immediate use. A shoe must decline to fulfil its duty before another is bought; a kaftan must drop, or be sold, off the vendor's back

ere he will treat himself to another; a shouba lasts until it is eaten up, and one day the peasant finds he must have another, or go bare-backed.

Curious was the collection of goods in this labyrinth of lanes, where each trade keeps to its separate quarter. On this occasion we entered that of the money-changers and silversmiths. The former were, almost without exception, old men, with long white beards and tight-fitting coats, reaching to the ground, disclosing here and there some sort of silken under-garment. We took them to be Jews, as they sat there behind the open counters, their dirty claw-like hands ornamented with rings of price, toying with piles of copper money, and silver pillars of rubles. The gold and paper was protected by a net of iron; while at the back were shelves containing all sorts of odds and ends—rows of chains, once worn by portly priests, an embossed silver beaker, or an Oriental vessel for rose-water. Occasionally there were seen glass cases, in which were displayed bits of Eastern jewelry, turquoises, necklaces, bracelets, bits of amber, silver watches of the turnip order, Greek crosses, diptyches, little eikons, odd morsels of *bric-à-brac* from far countries; but nothing of much value, nothing for which a

stranger would not have paid double its worth.

The silversmiths' row glittered with Church-plate, christening cups, crosses for the clergy, and articles in niello. Some of the spoons were beautiful, many chequered and diapered in steel and silver; whilst others were marked with intricate patterns in gold, silver, or platina. The Tartar work was remarkable —a mixture also of steel and silver, but not wrought in the same manner as the niello. The shops of greatest value were those of the furriers. Not intending to buy, however, we did not enter any of them; but we used to watch the people whose Summer employment it was to air the bunches of costly sables, beautifully soft shiny skins, with black bushy tails. Then there was Siberian fox, a bluish fur, much prized; and lynx, as well as delicate ermine, and the larger skins of bears and other wild animals. Nor must the curliest of lamb-skins, from Astrakhan and the Caspian, be forgotten.

Many a visit we paid to the Gostinnoi before we could find our way to the different departments. One long row would be all but impassable, from the number of empty packing-cases; the inhabitants seemed to drive a thriving trade in Manchester cottons, heaped up in piles

from floor to roofs; and printed woollen shawls of many colours hung on strings across the ceiling. Bearded, long-coated men would come and ask us to buy, in low tones and soft language, as they pointed to their goods; and we fondly trusted that the word we uttered in reply, "Spassibo," meant "No, thank you." There were little alleys for kaftans and caps, samevors and tea-kettles, over which we did not linger.

One whole district was filled with pins and needles, cottons and tapes; but we always dawdled in the gallery devoted to shining silks, brocades, and church vestments, and there were windows gorgeous with the diadem caps worn by the nurses. On examination of the latter, we found that the back was a mere loose bag made of silk or velvet, and in many instances the gold, silver, and pearl embroidery on the stiff front was quite a work of art. We were tempted to buy, but found that these articles were very expensive, being from ten to forty rubles each. Another most attractive corridor was that which contained ecclesiastical furniture, shrines and rizas (images). The frames surrounding the latter were of wood, with carved and gilded flowers, roses, daisies, and lilies, fastened on. At a distance they were most effective,

but did not bear inspection; nor could much be said for the paintings, though when seen *en masse* they looked superb. One day we made a discovery; no one is ever supposed either to overcharge or bargain for a riza, for anything else you may bargain, but for an image, no; and we looked back with a mixture of shame and satisfaction on the fifteen rubles we had saved at St. Petersburg.

But the quaintest street in all the Gostinnoi was that of the trunk-makers, which was lined with wooden chests, painted in the most brilliant colours, flowers, scattered over grounds of vermillion, wreaths twined in and out, while the grandest of all were made of clouded tinfoil, rose-coloured, saffron, or the brightest of emerald green; looking, on a large scale, like the boxes used long ago which contained matches and a bottle of phosphorus. These trunks could not be intended for travelling, and we afterwards found that they were for the cottages of the poor, some to contain the clothes of the bride, others for the stowing away of sheets, towels, aprons, and baby-linen, which the Russian women delight in embroidering, at the sides and ends with a wide, coarse kind of open work, stitched in various colours and rough devices, which are exceedingly effective. They are also very fond of

patchwork, of which they make quilts and coverings for the great square pillows that, thrown down in any corner, serve for all the bed which they require. Then there were black chests picked out in gold and silver, suspiciously like the coffins we had seen at Abo; they, too, were to be had at a moment's notice.

Something having possessed us with the idea that in the early morning there would be a great deal going on in the Gostinnoi, we determined to get up by times, and visit it before breakfast; but, much to our surprise, at eight o'clock we found scarcely a shutter open, and the inhabitants were idly lounging about the passages, looking all that was unwashed, and smoking cigarettes. It was their breakfast-hour, and there were numbers of vendors, in suits of white cotton, running about with napkin-covered trays, heaped with rolls, butter, ham, and sausage; others, with steaming kettles, were supplying hot water; everyone had a teapot and glass of his own, placed on some convenient bar or ledge, and drank plentifully of the golden, lemon-flavoured liquid We looked about for the peculiar Tartar saucepan, but did not see it; it is very likely a Winter convenience. We never saw any women employed in those bazaars, where the men pass the day only. By eight in the evening every

door is secured by two or three locks, and an enormous padlocked bolt. The place is then abandoned, save by the watchmen, who patrol the corridors during the night.

Entering the Kremlin by the Spaski, or Sacred Gate, the visitor has the Miracle Monastery to the left, the Convent of the Ascension to the right, with the cupolas and chapels attached to them. The next large building is the Nicholas Palace, and in the rear there are two palaces belonging to private nobles. Skirting along the terrace, and turning our backs to the Moskva, we entered the square of the Kremlin, by no means a large space. Facing us to the north stood the white walls of Russia's most sacred building, the Church of the Assumption, in which the Czar crowns himself. To the west is the rustic side of the Italian Palace, in face of which stands the tall octagonal tower of Ivan Veliki, the shaft of which rises straight up to the height of 269 feet. It is the tallest tower in all this land of towers, and is surmounted by a dome, round which runs a gallery, encircled by a railing. The dome terminates in a golden cross, twenty feet in height. It is the pride of the Kremlin, and was erected by the Czar Boris, in 1600. By its side, a dwarf in comparison, stands a fair Italian belfry, and, facing the

Cathedral of the Assumption, with its five great gold-plated domes, are two smaller edifices, one the Cathedral of the Archangel, the ancient burial-place of the Czars, a white-washed building, with many gilded domes. The other, on the same side, within a stone's throw, is the Church of the Annunciation, with similar green roof and whitened walls, but its many cupolas are silvered. In it the Czars are baptised and married; so that in this quiet square, shut in at night by iron gates, the Czars may, from their palace, behold at one glance the theatre of the principal events of their lives.

Nothing can be more curiously picturesque than the effect of this strange group of buildings. Every evening did we wander amongst them, watching the effect of the setting sun, which is very grand, as it tinges the white walls rose colour, and flushes the innumerable cupolas and towers with red. But the scene is still more striking when the moonlight deepens the shadows, and throws its calm unworldly silvery light upon the piles, under which sleep so quietly the mighty dead, many of whom fought well to rear those sacred crosses upon the crescent.* At nine o'clock the gates of the

* The cross is only so placed in cities which have been delivered from Tartar dominion; and even in those the custom is not universal.

sacred square are closed, and then we used to take one of the sloping paths, which lead from the terrace to the gardens, sit under the trees, and listen to the charming, quaint old airs, which at that hour chime from the belfry above the sacred gate. They were hours never to be forgotten.

We chose early morning for our first visit to the Church of the Assumption, which is built after the model of the cathedral at Vladimir, by Aristotle Fioraventi, of Bologna. The height strikes the eye as excessive, as compared with the base. The five great cupolas, onion-shaped, have smaller satellites, all, as well as the scolloped roof, being covered with plates of copper, gilt and burnished. Under their scollops, or projecting eaves, are frescoes, probably not very old. It is surprising that they should withstand the frost, even for a few years. The exterior appears to be irregular; the windows under the cupolas are long and narrow, and those which pierce the wall are of the usual household kind, with a double scollop, like eyelids, over each. The interior is of the usual form; but the pillars and walls are so completely covered with frescoes and pictures that it seems to be smaller than it really is; and it is in fact only capable of containing eight

hundred people; but it is exceedingly lofty, and more than the usual quantity of light is admitted. The centre dome was richly painted in the year 1425, and represents the glorification of the Virgin. The other cupolas are decorated with figures of saints upon a golden ground, the effect of which is very fine. The centre is supported by four enormous pillars, on which not an inch is left bare, so covered are they with martyrdoms and images.

The cathedral is a treasure-house, which it requires both time and learning to understand thoroughly; still there is much that a traveller of moderate information can appreciate. In it all is ancient, save the Mount Sinai, the golden gift of Prince Polemkin, a shrine which contains the Host, a casket of untold value. Nothing else has been added since the time of Nicon—all is venerable; and this church is as dear to the heart of the old believer as it is to the Russian of the Reformed Church. The frescoes in the body of the building date from the end of the fifteenth century; and many of the figures are portrayed on golden grounds. Amongst these "Books of the Ignorant," as they were called in a council at Arras, there is a representation of the Last Judgment, in which the just, filled with a joy which is enhanced by a backward glance

at the grief of the condemned, pass into Paradise; whilst the latter are received at the gates of hell by horrid demons, with fiery tongues and long tails, and armed with instruments of torture. Some of the sacred subjects depicted around are encircled by the heads of heathen philosophers and historians, the name being written under each. They are curious, as showing the belief of the Greek fathers that these heroes would not be forgotten by the Almighty. The most ancient pictures and images in this church, some of which are supposed to date from the third century, are to be found on the Iconostas; and of these the most sacred is the celebrated Virgin of Vladimir, brought from Kherson by that prince some nine centuries ago. It is painted on wax—the face is very dark, nearly black, and of the Byzantine type. The drawing is good, which is rare. Contrary to custom, the infant's face nestles to the cheek of the mother, both being enclosed in the same horse-shoe-shaped glory; and part of the body drapery is visible. The highly-wrought nimbus is ornamented with four irregularly-placed stars, each star having four points tipped with a large pearl One centre is missing, but the remaining three consist of a ruby, an emerald, and a sapphire. An under

glory, forming a kind of cap, is made of a net of pearls, with a single diamond in the centre. Connecting the ends of the outer glory, and passing under the chin, is a broad band of gold, encrusted with pearls, curiously placed in groups. This slants across the breast; and to it is affixed a richly-wrought crescent, decorated with alternate gold bosses and jewels—a ruby, a sapphire, and a diamond. From the crescent hang three squares of gold, scolloped at the edges, having an equal number of gold bosses and large pearls, with a precious stone in the middle. The general outline of the drapery is sketched in pearls; and the whole is set in a richly-designed frame, in which the honeysuckle pattern is much employed. Some of these jewels are very fine—one emerald is valued at 10,000 rubles; and the whole at 200,000. Our Lady of Vladimir is the most sacred image in all Russia—the only one in the Czar's dominions which the Church allows to have been painted by St. Luke.

The tombs of the Patriarchs surround the walls, the holiest being placed in the four corners, which are regarded as places of honour in all Russian buildings. The body of Philip, the Metropolitan who was murdered in the Monastery at Tver, by order of the cruel Ivan, is

looked upon as the most sacred. He lies in a little chapel shut in by iron gates. His tomb, made of wood, is very simple. The skull is seen through a small square of glass let into the sarcophagus, and his body is supposed to be incorruptible. Several country people, who entered the chapel along with us, knelt and prayed fervently, each in turn kissing the glass, and pressing it with the forehead, whilst we stood reverently by. On leaving, money was dropped into a plate held by a sacristan; the Czar himself never quits the church without going through the same ceremony. In another corner sleeps the first Metropolitan of Moscow, from whose hand there is a painting, the Assumption of the Virgin, which hangs on the Iconostas.

A coronation in this cathedral must be a touching sight. The Czar, alone, on his knees, recites aloud the creed of the orthodox faith, and offers up a prayer for the empire; after which he himself places the crown upon his head, and, passing into the sanctuary, as High Priest, takes from the table the bread and wine of salvation. When the ceremony is concluded, with the crown still upon his head, and clad in his royal robes, he passes through the great door of the cathedral for the

first and last time; a solemn moment, for no foot will again cross that threshold until he has surrendered all earthly grandeur, and another Czar wears his sacred crown. In a corner stands a curious erection, which closely resembles a four-post bedstead. This is said to have been the throne of Vladimir, but is in reality the seat occupied by the early Czars during the service. It was hung, in olden days, with cloth of gold, and the "White Czar," sitting in it with his crown upon his head, his staff in his hand, his long flowing beard, and his royal robes, must have been a sight to see.

On the cathedral's eastern wall there are pictures of the seven councils, which are well worth dwelling upon; and, strangely enough, there is a a little painted chapel in the dome, in order to see which we had to ascend a cork-screw staircase, formed in the thickness of the wall, and leading to a grated window placed opposite. The chapel itself is only used upon the election of a bishop. From our eyrie there was a capital view of the painted dome, and it was strange to look down upon the richly-coloured edifice, and watch the people kneeling before the twinkling lights placed before the shrines, to commemorate the dark chambers of the primitive Christians.

A stone's throw from its walls stands the Arkhangelski Sobor, or Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, the royal place of interment up to the time of Peter the Great. Its low groined vaults are very curious; long rows of coffins preserve the dust of many a Czar; that of Ivan IV. is covered by a black pall, he having adopted the cowl just before he died. We felt awe-struck as we gazed at it. That cruel, terrible Ivan, who had from time to time such noble aspirations for the good of his country, who, after a youth of storm, became for thirteen years a good man, under the guidance of his saintly wife, Anastasia, but only to relapse, and become the habitation of more devils than before. He was a believer in God, but, like the devils, he believed and trembled, and his religion was smothered by his extreme superstition. He was a reader of the stars, a firm believer in the influence of precious stones, which he imagined to fade or deepen in colour according to his state of body. The same idea is still found in Spain with regard to the opal, and in Italy to coral. "This fair coral and this fair turcas you see, take in your hand; of their nature are orient colours. Put them on my hand and arm. I am poisoned by disease. You see they show their virtue by the change of their pure colour into

pale . . . This diamond is the orient, richest and most precious of all others; I never affected it; it restrains fury and luxury, and gives abstinence and chastity." So spake old Ivan on his death-bed. A more ruthless wretch never reigned, yet, strange to say, he kept peaceful possession of his throne, was even in a certain way popular, and, when he talked of retiring to a monastery, the people, with cries and tears, besought him to remain.

The highly-ornamented tomb of Demetrius, whose disappearance in early youth, was the cause of so much woe to his country, stands near that of his father, the last of the Rurik family. It is of the greatest historical importance; but no true Rurik sleeps inside. The only emperor interred in this mausoleum is the young Peter II., son of the unfortunate Alexis, and the last male of the Romanoff family. On the wall, above each coffin, is an effigy of its occupant, clad in long white robes; and a faint glory encircles each pale face. Twice every year a funeral service is performed in St. Michael, "for those who lie buried under that burden of sin, voluntary and involuntary, known to themselves, or unknown." This vault is a solemn place to visit. The Church of the Annunciation, being used by the Imperial family

for the ceremonies of baptism and marriage, has livelier associations, but is less interesting. Its silvered cupolas, however, and its floor of agate and jasper, are beautiful; and its screen boasts of the usual quantity of precious stones, shrines, and sacred pictures. In the portico there are some highly curious frescoes, representing the Greek philosophers as heralds of Christ.

CHAPTER IX.

Visit of the French Consul—Russian Cuisine—Caviare—Fruit—Quaint Houses and Chapels—Great Boulevard—The Riding School—The Romanoff House—The Post Office—The B Flat Market—The Arsenal—Law Courts—Great Bell of Moscow—Religious Solemnity—Treasury of the Holy Synod—Robes of the Priesthood—The Chrism sent from Constantinople—Library of the Reznitra—A Colony of Crows—Fringe-makers.

WE reached home just in time to receive a visit from the French Consul, to whom we had sent a letter of introduction. Most of the Moscow sights requiring tickets of admission, he promised to send us a whole bundle; and was very kind in telling us what places were really worth seeing. Preparations for dinner making their appearance, with an "*Au revoir, mesdames,*" he vanished. These dinners, by-the-by, were very nicely served. The Russian *cuisine* closely resembles the English; they

are very partial to roast meat and rice pudding, the monotony of which is relieved by a dash of French cookery. The truly national stchi, or cabbage-soup, is excellent—all sorts of vegetables, tomatoes and potatoes preponderating, are boiled in mutton broth, along with barley; and just before the tureen is placed upon the table, a large cup of sour cream is thrown into it, or occasionally served separately. The isinglass patties were sent up, as a matter of course; and occasionally we had slices of cold sturgeon, very pink in hue, along with savoury jelly. Moscow prides itself especially upon its veal cutlets, which in England would be called chops; but they are not so good as our own. We had salads and pickled cucumbers, with salted cherries and currants; but they were spoiled by the addition of rose-water, and of some peculiar herb, which made them taste as if they had been shut up for four and twenty hours in an old Indian cabinet.

No one can have a notion what caviare is unless he has eaten it perfectly fresh. It must be taken from the fish directly it is killed, eaten during the day, and is spoiled by the least shaking. The sturgeon is brought alive to the great towns, which is not difficult in a country that is a net-work of watery roads.

The proper colour of caviare resembles jade stone. Each egg ought to be separate, and when put into the mouth, it should melt into a creamy substance. Alas! for our sophisticated taste, we did not like it so well as the pitch-like composition we had been in the habit of hearing called "first-rate Russian caviare."

The fruit, which is abundantly hawked about the streets was very fine—rosy strawberries and large cherries, as well as raspberries and currants. But if possible they were dirtier than those of St. Petersburg. In the heat and dust we longed for something cool and refreshing, but never could make up our minds to eat any.

Thinking to save time on Sunday morning, we set off the evening before, in search of the English church. In vain were all our inquiries —we were utterly unsuccessful in our attempts to find it. We afterwards heard that it was closed for a time, and the notice removed from the door. Our search for it obtained for us a thorough knowledge of the upper part of the town. The shops were handsome, the streets wide, winding, and picturesque, no house being like its neighbour. There were many stained yellow, green-shuttered, or whitewashed; but some stood back with gardens and shrubberies, others were built of stone, with wide flights of steps meet-

ing at the door, and ornamented with great vases full of flowers—pleasant abodes. There were numerous little chapels, green, red, and saffron, or a mixture of all those colours, quaint places, with a mouldy smell, into which we stepped, to hear scraps of the evening service. These churches are rarely shut—something always appears to be going on in them; and it frequently happened that we heard chaunting at singular hours, when only two or three people would be assembled. These services we took to be certain prayers without which the orthodox commence no worldly undertaking.

Our way led to the great boulevard which encircles the town, where there are plenty of shady trees and flowering shrubs, with pleasant seats. It would be a delightful promenade were it not for the dust, which spoils everything. The sight of the adjacent broad canal was quite refreshing. There may be small pieces of water in Russian towns, but none of them possess fountains, and it being a climate without dew, long before the short Summer closes, flowers, foliage, and herbage are destroyed, otherwise Moscow would be a charming Summer residence. Even in Winter there is dust, when the snow in the thoroughfares becomes pulverized.

Before reaching home we passed the riding-school, an immensely large but low building, coated with plaster. It boasts of being the largest room, with unsupported roof, in the world, and architects look upon the construction of this wooden roof as a marvel. Strangers are allowed to examine the structure, but we did not care to do so. This vast chamber is 560 ft. by 158 ft., but the height is only forty-two feet, which disproportion gives it a vault-like appearance. On each side there are large porcelain stoves, for it is principally used in Winter. When the cold is severe the troops are exercised in it, and it can accommodate two regiments of cavalry.

The Consul had spoken of the Romanoff house as a curious specimen of a Boyar's house in the olden time. It is situated in the Varvarskaia Street, just outside that part of the Gostinnoi in which all the stationers in Russia seem to have established themselves, so large are the magazines which open upon the colonnades, but are not absolutely under the roof of the Chinese town. They are piled from floor to ceiling with stacks of paper, bundles of goose-quills, pyramids of coarse scrivener's wax, piles of account-books, armies of ink-bottles, and reservoirs of wafers, all on an amazingly large scale.

The Romanoff House is built of stone, with enormously thick walls. It is almost incredible that it could have been inhabited by a family, although it consists of four stories, as well as cellars. The latter would once have been filled with mead and kvass, a liquid prepared from different fruits, over which is poured vodka, a small kind of whisky. The whole being sweetened, it is placed in the sun to ripen, after which it is bottled and stored away. The ground-floor was occupied by kitchens, only remarkable for their diminutive size, the scanty furniture consisting of three wooden chairs, a salt-box, and an old iron lamp. The next floor was used by the family. There were four little rooms, one of which was put aside for religious purposes. In it the Boyar received the clergy at Christmas, Easter, and other church festivals; it was also used for domestic worship, and called the Chamber of the Cross. The walls were covered with designs in a subdued red, upon a sage-green ground, reminding us of the Oxford papers now so much used in old houses. The roof was ribbed and low, and the casements very small. A small chamber, said to have been the nursery, looked cheerful enough, but a nurse of modern size, a cradle, and the smallest of babies, would have filled it to overflowing. Toys and lesson-

books were scattered about, prized as having belonged to the infant ancestors of the present Emperor.

We were charmed to discover in the obscure vestibule two little carved oak chairs, which folded up flat, the exact counterparts of a couple in our own far-away ante-chamber. For a moment we were seized with a home-sick qualm; but our guide allowed no time for sentiment, it was probably near his dinner-hour, and he whisked us up a narrow, winding staircase to the dining-room. It had a carved roof, ribbed and painted to match the walls, which resembled those below. Our conductor was evidently proud of the few articles of plate it contained—such as a pair of ewers, said to have been presented to the Romanoff family by Charles I., and a well-chiselled statuette of the same monarch. They were placed on a miniature gorka, or mountain, attached to the wall, which is unusual; the Russians having never used the mediæval *dressoir*, the parent of the modern side-board. They preferred the gorka, which is a fixed erection, placed in the middle of the room, reaching from floor to ceiling, in the form of a pyramid, and admirably calculated to display to advantage the large assortment of basins, cups, flagons, dishes, and other articles

of plate collected by the Boyars, and which were generally the fruit of bribes, war, or plunder. But in those half-civilized times the family wealth mainly consisted of jewels and precious metals.

The adjoining chamber, a reception-room, contained the only commodity in the place which we really coveted—a quantity of leather, which looked amazingly like real Cordova. Above was the state bedroom, which had an almost comfortable appearance. Though low, it was cheerful. The ceiling was curiously carved; and the interlacing patterns were coloured. Round the room ran narrow benches, stuffed, and covered with ancient yellow brocade; and a four-post bed, with grand though faded satin drapery, quite looked as if it really could afford a comfortable night's rest. At its foot stood a painted trunk or coffer, elaborately ornamented, like those in the bazaar. It contained Czar Michael's slippers in jorka leather, and the Tsaritsa's night-gown, of coarse home-spun linen, embroidered according to the Russian fashion of the present day, with open work and thick thread. Age had given to it the true Isabella hue.

A turret-chamber opened upon the roof, which was ornamented with pierced metal

work, and a dismounted vane showed the Romanoff arms—a griffin bearing a sword and a shield. There were many other articles scattered about, for the house is in reality a little museum; but altogether we left the small palace with a feeling of dissatisfaction. It has been so thoroughly painted and done up within a short period; and we had besides no faith as to the genuineness of its contents. Still it is curious as a specimen of architecture, at a period when much was borrowed from the Tartars.

A visit to the bankers being necessary, my companion returned home, leaving me to pursue my way first to the post-office, an extensive, low, white building, where it was difficult to obtain letters, and make the officials understand, as they spoke nothing but Russian; and from thence through that part of the town overlooked by the Kremlin. The way was long, but not unpleasant, the winding streets being clean and cheerful. It was not a shopping quarter; and there were numbers of large and handsome private houses, with trees and hot-houses. Here and there stray creepers flung their branches over spaces of blank wall, which made one long to stretch up and look over them. Mr. L——'s abode was charming. The bank was attached to a large, green-shuttered, veran-

dahed house, which was shut up, to keep it cool, and looked as if it had gone to sleep in the sunshine. It was built of wood; the large courtyard was enclosed by iron gates and a lodge; and at the back were gardens and trees. Banking is a profitable employment—especially so when every advantage is taken of strangers. A very large church stood near, without anything particular to see in its whitewashed interior; but when the hour struck, the bells chimed out sweet and long from a many-storied Italian tower.

The streets in this neighbourhood were very quiet—almost suburban. The circular promenade at this unfrequented side of the town resembled a country shrubbery; and there were common flowers to perfume the air. In returning, the old horse-market had to be traversed. It was an unoccupied, dusty desert, on which the relentless sun scorched down from a cloudless, hard blue sky, and made one thankful to collapse on to a tree-sheltered bench, outside the Katai Gorod.

There was abundant amusement to be derived from watching the proceedings in a kind of promenade market, where old clothes were bought, sold, or exchanged. This place has two names—the more polite call it the Elbow

Market; the less particular, the B flat Market. And there is a third cognomen, still more racy, derived from the name of an insect with which I am not personally acquainted. The scene was very droll. Where the garments originally come from it is difficult to say, for the lower class of Russians never seem to buy anything new; nor did they appear to be clothes cast off by a richer class. There were neat Manchester cotton gowns, and others of gaudy Tartar design, in every stage but the new; ditto boots, shoes, shawls, aprons—everything was there. Buyers and sellers are not always people who make barter a profession. Any person discontented with his toilet, or wanting occupation, comes to this spot, sure to find some other person with a coat to dispose of, a shoe that pinches, or with a hole in the right boot instead of the left. There were animated discussions, and a great throwing back of long locks to clear the brow (the Moujiks secure their hair with a ribbon fillet), and occasional pushing and pulling; but the general tone of voice, even if pitched higher than usual, was never harsh, although the Russian language is said to be rich in terms of abuse as well as of affection.

On the other side of the dentellated wall ran a street of wooden huts and open stalls, where

every sort of used-up furniture was to be found, and it was long before I was cured of the delusion that something worth having could be disinterred from the rubbish-heaps. There were piles of old riza frames and plaques, the pictures they once contained (and which are never in any case exposed for sale) having been reverently put away, as well as heaps of musical instruments and old pottery. I poked about at my leisure, the people being civil and gentle, and allowing me to do as I liked. Such a collection in any other country would probably have contained something worth having; curious odds and ends might have been unearthed at the Jew's Market at Frankfort, a rich harvest would have repaid the searcher in the Piazza Navona, a marvel of leather, or jorga out of date, would have turned up at Cordova, but in Russia nothing, absolutely nothing.

Still I paid many a visit to these quarters; the people interested me exceedingly, and I loved to watch them. My companion declined to accompany me, under the plea of a sensitive nose, and uttered dismal warnings respecting cholera, the plague, *plika palonika*, and other pleasant maladies. On this occasion I was crossing the red-hot place, devoured by thirst, when, spying a little man clad in white, who was carrying a

huge bottle full of a pleasing pink liquid, I beckoned him up, put four copecs into his hand, and made violent signs of a wish to drink. He took a glass from a wooden rack fastened on to his back, and filled it again and again, till nothing but shame induced me at last to signify that I was satisfied. The beverage was a kind of currant kvass, made without vodka, and not at all unpleasant.

During my absence my companion had been entertaining the Consul, who had brought tickets for the interiors which it was necessary to visit. At present, however, we were satisfied with the exterior of things, wishing to become well acquainted with the general aspect of the city and people, before we plunged into museums and palaces.

We had arranged to spend the rest of the day in the people's park, but the exceeding beauty of the evening tempted us into the Kremlin, the western side of which we had not yet explored. Passing through the Nicholas Gate, to our right stood the arsenal, an Italian building, faced with fine white stone, and which occupies the site of the Streltsi Barracks. How the uneasy ghost of Napoleon must rage if permitted to visit this spot, and mark the splendid array, tier after tier, of French cannon,

embossed with the royal crown and imperial bird, the latter looking all alive, and as eager as ever to be at its old flights again. There is a gun for every day in the year, and one to spare—they number 366; and, as far as I could judge, they were superb field-pieces, smooth, sound, and well sculptured. The next victim of disaster is Austria, who is represented by 189 cannon. The Prussian guns are 123, and the spoils of smaller states make up a grand total of 875. All the Swedish cannon are in St. Petersburg. Peter the Great caused numbers of Russian cannon and church bells to be melted down and recast, but one or two giants have been preserved as curiosities—such as a mortar weighing forty tons, cast by the false Dimitri, and another which is called the Czar cannon, on account of its size. Altogether they form a grand collection.

The law-courts, opposite the arsenal, are a noble pile, of the same architecture and material. They contain a fine hall, but as the courts were not sitting, the building was closed, and we did not see the interior. The treasury, with its fair new façade, also Italian, stretches along the same side, its ancient back looking out, as we had before observed, upon the Alexander Gardens. We passed on, and turning along the many-

windowed front of the palace, entered the Kremlin Square, and stood to look at an operation which old Ivan Veliki was undergoing. Workmen were quickly destroying a time-worn iron cage surrounding the dome, possibly placed there to enclose the gallery, but it also looked as if it might have been used by some astrologer of old to cast his horoscopes. However that might be, its hour was come, and as bit after bit fell on the pavement, it broke into morsels and filled the air with a cloud of dusty fragments.

At the foot of Ivan Veliki reposes the great bell of Moscow. We never could get up any admiration for this useless monster, although it does weigh 444,000 pounds. Too heavy ever to be swung, it remains where it was cast in the reign of the Empress Anne. The morsel close at hand, torn from its side, is said to have been caused by a flaw in the casting. The Italian campanile of red brick is dwarfed by its neighbour Ivan, but possesses several tiers of bells, one whole floor of which fell to the ground the night the Emperor Nicholas died. The crash was terrible, killing the family upon the ground-floor, who had charge of the tower. But the real bell of Moscow is a grand and useful bell. We heard its voice but once, as it only rings on

great occasions. Part of the famous bell brought from Novgorod by Ivan IV. is incorporated in its substance, and the broken bells which fell from the burning tower in the disaster of 1812 were also used in its casting. This bell always rings when the Nicene or orthodox creed is read in the Church of the Assumption.

Whilst we were lingering about, the sweetest burst of voices struck upon our ears. Following the sound, and rounding an obscure corner, we saw by the scattered twigs of green box and rosemary that some Church fête was being celebrated. Stumbling up a dark staircase, and pushing open a cloth door, we entered a small and brilliantly-lighted chapel. A gorgeously-attired priest stood in front of the Iconostas, reading from a missal, which he held with jewelled hands. His white beard flowed down to his middle; and his head-gear glistened with diamonds. From time to time he intoned a verse with his own deep voice; and the rich mellow voices of the responding choir rolled through the golden fret-work. It was very fine, very melodious; but, alas! we could not stand the intense heat. The perspiration streamed from the faces around; and our Northern noses could still less bear the odour which arose from the unwashed crowd and their oily garments,

which had indeed "an ancient fish-like smell." The people were packed as close as herrings. With difficulty we had squeezed ourselves in; but with four-fold energy we made for the door.

Oh! the blessing of once more breathing the pure air!—of stepping back into the soft twilight! Whilst standing to recover ourselves, a lad in most dilapidated garments approached, and made vehement signs that we should mount the stairs. He evidently considered himself a guide, and spoke some six words of French. Amongst them we distinguished the words, *trésor*, and *sacristie*. So up we mounted; a bell was rung, we were delivered over to a sacristan, and entering a low-vaulted chamber, found that we were in the treasury of the patriarchs, now called the Reznitsa, or Treasury of the Holy Synod; and a treasure-house it surely was! Finding that we were helpless strangers, the judicious sacristan ceased to talk, and produced from a corner cupboard a very dirty little book. But handsome is that handsome does; and we no longer objected to its mean appearance when we found that it was a good French catalogue. It did not however mention, and we were unable to ask to see, the most famous relic in this sacristy—the scarf given to the Czar Alexis by the Bishop of Nicœa, precious as having been

worn by Alexander of Alexandria, who sat by Constantine at the great council. We had been told that it was a white fabric, worked with a rude representation of the Ascension.

Some of the robes are exceedingly curious—one, embroidered with sentences from the Nicene Creed, worked in pearls, was very likely the vestment which, exciting the wrath of the patriarch Nicon, caused him to send monks to the holy mountain, to obtain correct copies of the service books, his microscopic eye having discovered that in the pearl-wrought sentences the word "holy" was inserted before the words "giver of life." The erasure of this word "holy" is one of the standard grievances complained of by the old religionists. Another robe, the most gorgeous that it is possible to conceive, was made of crimson velvet, stiff with pearls, precious stones, and embroidery, and weighed no less than fifty-four pounds. This mantle possessed a strange interest, it having been presented to the patriarch Denys by the terrible Ivan, in expiation of the murder of his son, the Tsarevitch John. Another and earlier memento of this unfortunate youth was a splendid Oriental sardonyx, on which a figure is cut in relief. At the head is a reliquary, containing a piece of the true cross. It was executed for

Ivan, upon the birth of his son. There are many other ornaments in semi-precious stones, as well as in gold, niello, and enamel, resembling in shape the pendants hanging from the crescent attached to the holy image painted by St. Luke in the cathedral. These had probably been used as charms and amulets, of which the Russians are still so fond. The jewelled croziers and mitres, four of the latter of which had belonged to Nicon, were very fine. The plate, handed down from the patriarchs, is plain and massive, and appears to have seen much service. The tall goblets, ewers and cups would have looked magnificent upon a gorka. We should have liked to examine them more minutely, for many were engraved with the heraldic bearings and names of the donors; and there was a collection of truly original spoons, of which my companion made a note in her memory, in order to sketch them.

The first precious drops of the chrism sent from Constantinople, although endlessly diluted, are contained in a vessel of copper, ornamented with mother-of-pearl, and called "the alabaster." It has every appearance of antiquity—the shape is truly Oriental; the bulging base and long narrow neck of the vase might now be found in Turkey by the curiosity-hunter. Once every

year a small quantity of fluid is poured out of it, but carefully replaced from the new chrism, for the preparation of which very curious vessels are used. They consist of a very large and massive caldron, along with a sieve and ladle, two kettles, and sixteen silver jars, the whole weighing upwards of thirteen cwts. The sacred oil, used alone for the ceremony of baptism at coronations, and the consecration of churches, can only be prepared at St. Petersburg, Kief, and Moscow, from whence a portion is sent to each diocese for further distribution amongst the orthodox churches. From Moscow it is conveyed in the sixteen silver vases exhibited in the sacristy. The chrism is boiled and bottled during Lent, with great ceremony, and is prepared from a vast number of ingredients, the most precious consisting of a small portion of the original chrism, and a morsel of some very holy relic. To those are added white wine, vegetable oil, spices, myrrh, mastic, and balsams. The Metropolitan, the bishops in their state robes and glittering head-gear, along with the principal clergy, assist in the preparation. What a curious scene it must present! What a picture could be drawn of the group as they bend over the simmering caldron, and handle the antique vessels, with strange forms

and mysterious words. The low-ribbed, painted room, a relic itself of Tartar architecture, fitfully illuminated by the flickering flames, the strange vestments, the flowing beards, the jewelled ornaments—the whole scene would appear more like some sacrificial rite, some form of Eastern magic, than a Christian ceremony in the nineteenth century.

A small but valuable library is attached to the Reznitsa, the most precious of its contents being the rare MSS., in Greek and Sclavonic, collected by the patriarch Nicon, to aid him in his correction of the Scriptures. At parting, the civil sacristan presented us with two or three little books, which we accepted with gratitude, as souvenirs of this highly-interesting collection. Unfortunately they were in Russian, so we were unable to profit by their contents. This was our last attempt at sight-seeing for some time, a pretty smart attack of illness obliging me to keep the house for a fortnight. My companion considered it the result of my wanderings in the old clothes market; my medical man to a too hasty plunge into cold water; and I myself to the unwholesome properties of the Neva water. Our friend, the Consul, sent to our aid the physician attached to the Foundling Hospital, and we were in-

debted to both of them for much kindness. Monsieur G—— was by birth an Italian, from the Swiss frontier, but had been so long established in Moscow that Russian had become like his native language. He spoke French very well; and, curiously enough, was acquainted with one of our relations who had served in the Crimea. He gave us not only the benefit of his medical skill, but a great deal of amusing information about Moscow.

My companion discovered a capital French and English library, and, in anticipation of long days in the house, set up a quantity of work. She tried very hard to match some fine long cloth, but was assured in the shops that she "might search all Russia" without finding so good a quality. Some ordinary "horraks" was, however, procured, which in England would have been about eightpence a yard, but in Moscow cost half a crown. This was the result of the high duties levied on foreign goods; and consequently there is only a sale for inferior articles. Being able to read aloud, the time passed pleasantly enough, although when the sun went down we did regret "the golden Summer eves." The heat was great, and the dust in an hour effaced all trace of the peasant's matinal labours. We used to think

with longing of a certain garden, in which we had spent many a refreshing hour during the same month of the previous year, eating mina-belles, and listening to the gurgling of the crystal stream, which came washing down impetuously from the green Juna, through thick beech woods. When not unable to read or work, it amused me much to watch the way of life amongst a family of crows, who lived on the building opposite. They were not sleek black birds, like English crows, but grey, and nearly as large as ravens—probably they would become quite white in Winter. So crusty a pater-familias as the head of that house it has never been my ill-luck to become acquainted with. He sat in a shady corner, an angle formed by the ribbed green roof and a red chimney-pot, quitting it only at certain hours, when the whole family went to market. And from this nook he croaked forth eternal scoldings, and dealt awful pecks at any of the unwary who approached him. Even Madame, whose temper was none of the best, was not spared; and when I heard a gamut of caws, I knew that if quick enough I should see a billful of feathers flying about. Why the family stood such usage, I used to marvel; but habit is everything. Then again the human life under

that green roof was very amusing. The many windows were almost always open, and we had the benefit of all that went on.

On the ground-floor there was a shop, alongside of which ran a passage into some mysterious back premises that were very populous. We had an idea that in those recesses old clothes and vodka were sold. There was a constant issuing from them of men and old boots, over which there were warm disputes, if not actual combats. One man would twitch a boot away from another, and brandish it in the air, and the happy possessor of a pair would run off, to be pursued and brought back, when the argument would re-commence, and the whole scene be acted over again. On the floor above the people never appeared to have anything to do—they spent their time in lounging at the windows; but the inhabitants of the third story were to us the most interesting. This was occupied by a quantity of neatly-dressed young women, employed in making fringes. They appeared to lead an easy, comfortable life, working until dusk, when a lamp was lit, and their preparations for repose commenced. Then there would be a great dragging about of square pillows, in gay patchwork covers, and tables were pulled up to the broad window-seats, with which they

were on a level. The cushions were then thrown down anywhere, but the place of honour appeared to be the window-seat. Heads were buried in the feathers, and all was quiet for the short night. My indisposition rendering me restless, I was up with the dawn, and able to observe the morning arrangements of my young neighbours, which were as primitive as those of the previous night. The day's toilet was accomplished by a shake, the pillows were beaten and put away, the tables replaced, and the hair smoothed down by the hand. Each fair one gave five minutes to contemplation and a cigarette at the window, and then the fringe-making began again for the day. On Saturdays they left off work early, and disappeared for a few hours, probably going to be steamed clean, in anticipation of their Sunday holiday, when they turned out in clean print dresses and gay shawls, some with bare heads, others with bright silk handkerchiefs wound round them. They had also their little bits of jewelry, a slender chain with a tiny medal, a bracelet of Tula-work, or a brooch of coarse niello. We became quite interested in their proceedings.

The upper story of all was a Traktir, or tea and billiard house. It was quietly conducted,

and closed at midnight. In such places it is usual to have a large barrel-organ, and the place of honour, the seat reserved for the most favourite guest, is at its side. Fortunately for our ears, the instrument in this establishment was in a room round the corner. Occasionally we were regaled with street music. Some of the voices we heard were very fine. Our attention was particularly drawn towards them when we remembered how Madame C—— used to speak of the singing in the country villages. She, herself an excellent musician, had collected amongst the people, and arranged, a number of airs, which she was in the habit of playing. The general character of the national music is mournful, and in the minor key. The great attention paid to church-music must have its effect. Monsieur G—— mentioned the fondness of the Moujiks for music. In very remote districts they make a curious instrument out of a log of wood, shaping it with a hatchet, and rendering it musical by the addition of strings soaked in warm resin.

Many nobles keep bands of well-trained musicians, chosen from the peasants upon their estates. Prince Galitzin has a choir of thirty; but thirty, in the glorious days of serfdom,

would have been a small number, when great nobles had occasionally as many as a hundred, besides troops of actors, drawn from the same source.

CHAPTER X.

Winter in Moscow—The Drama and Theatres—The Old Religionists—Veneration of Russians for their Old Capital—Considerations as to our Future Progress—Walk through the City—Suburbs of Moscow—The Novospaski, or New Passion Monastery—Violent Tempest—The Maiden's Field—The Novo Devichi Convent—University of Moscow—Arrival of the Czar—The Muscovite Population.

MONSIEUR G—— was never weary of dwelling upon the delights of a Moscow Winter, which he infinitely preferred to the dusty Summer. "When the snow," he said, "is hard, the atmosphere perfectly clear, and the sun tinges the gilded domes and painted towers with its own hue, the snow will then be in one place rosy, in another dazzling white, to which green roofs afford a charming contrast. But," he continued, "the moonlight is the most lovely thing imaginable. When the

moon is at the full, parties are made, the sledges are rigged up with coloured lanterns, flags, and tinkling bells, and off go a whole procession of friends, who peep out of their furs to converse, and to admire the graceful shadows thrown by the skeleton trees, the mysterious black patches, and the brilliant, sparkling, dazzling landscape, where all is as clearly visible as at noon."

One great Winter amusement was now lacking, the theatre. We had admired the vast exterior of the present beautiful building, which, erected in 1808, was soon after completely gutted by fire, but again opened to the public in 1824.

The history of the Moscow theatres, and their frequent destruction, shows the use of such an institution as the house-market. The first dramatic performance in Moscow took place in a private house, after which a succession of wooden theatres were built, that regularly perished one after the other by fire. Peter the Universal employed his shipbuilders as actors, and organized plays, which he himself witnessed in the Suhareff tower; but, faithful to his principle of encouraging his people to patronize his efforts, he allowed no money to be taken at the door. In the reign of Catherine II. theatrical representations improved greatly, under the fostering

hand of an Englishman, who also founded the still existing Vauxhall. In the Empress's time there was a theatre at the Foundling Hospital. The foundlings themselves constructed the theatre, decorations, and dresses, as well as furnished the orchestra and performers. But the adventurous Englishman aforesaid, the director of the regular theatre, grew jealous, and it was closed. The drama can scarcely be said to be a national amusement in Russia, for theatre-going is expensive, and therefore confined to the rich. It takes place, too, at a season when the rustic delights in a glass of hot chai, close to the organ in a well-warmed Traktir, or a draught of vodka by the side of his own stove; and there are few cheap theatres for the benefit of the people. Mr. G—— dwelt with delight upon the charms of the Bolshoi Theatre on a gala night, when operas are given, declaring that nothing could be more brilliant than this house on such occasions. The upper tiers consist of open balconies, where beauty, diamonds, and toilets are displayed to the greatest advantage. There are withdrawing-rooms, in which it is usual to have light refreshments served, but the Russian audience do not, like the Milanese, indulge in regular suppers. Many of the boxes in La Scala have

kitchens attached to them, and two or three possess stables. The corridors of the Bolshoi Mr. G—— declared to be the most beautiful sight of all; they are lighted *au jour* with wax, and decorated with innumerable flowering plants, forming a delightful promenade and spectacle. There is a second theatre, used entirely for the drama. It stands close to the Bolshoi, but is considerably smaller. This also is closed during the Summer.

Mr. G—— might have been born in Moscow, so fondly was he attached to the place; and we delighted him by saying how much, as a town, we preferred it to St. Petersburg. True Russians still regard their "Holy Mother Moscow" as the capital of their country, the city where their Czars are crowned, their ancient princes interred. St. Petersburg is to them the residence of the Emperor, a modern town, French, European, anything but Russian. No; their "Holy Mother"—and they love to caress the words—is their capital, and the heart of all the Russias. Our friend the Consul was also much attached to it. He spoke the language fluently, having learnt to do so in the Baltic provinces. He had not, however, been for any length of time a resident in Russia proper, and from him we heard remarks touching various

things and customs which had ceased to appear strange to Monsieur G——. He was never weary of expatiating upon the Old Religionists, who astonished him greatly by their extreme notions of Conservatism. They number in the Czar's dominions between seven and eight millions of souls, the greater part being scattered about the steppes of the Volga and the Don; but there are a considerable number in the suburbs of Moscow, where they confine themselves to the Preobrojensky suburb, famous as the outlying village where Peter drilled the childish regiment which afterwards fought so bravely at Pultava. There they follow their callings, baptising in the small lake close at hand; for they deny the efficacy of the rite as administered in the reformed Russian church. They stick to the old and corrupt version of the Bible; regard the reforming Nicon as Antichrist; seclude their women, as they were secluded before the time of the liberal Patriarch; have their own tea and eating-houses; avoid sitting on the same bench, and gather their garments together, for fear of coming in contact with a New Religionist, who reads Nicon's translation of the Testament. Their converts are required to shake the dust from anything which may have been used by a Niconian, and never to share with them a

bath or a meal. He discussed the probability of the various reasons why Roscolnicks refuse to eat potatoes, some rejecting them as a modern innovation, others because they believe the potato to have been the original apple of discord. We were quite inclined to join in the Consul's "*Ma foi, c'est incroyable.*"

Unfortunately, these amiable people are divided amongst themselves. There are Popofchins and Bezpopofchins. The former accept the services of the priests expelled from the orthodox church; the mutilated services of the extreme party are administered by laymen. The present Emperor has endeavoured, and with some success, to propitiate these stubborn, narrow-minded men. The Old Religionists cannot be called dissenters, inasmuch as they stick to their original faith; but dissent is rampant in Russia, where it is said to exist under a hundred and fifty different forms.

One afternoon we had a long consultation with our friend respecting our future journeyings. He was quite of opinion that we could descend the Volga with ease and safety, and agreed with us that it would be a pity to go as far as Nijni Novgorod, and have to return to Moscow. The great fair at the former place would commence in a week or ten days, and if

we were there at the beginning, he promised to secure accommodation for us, which is very difficult to obtain in a town whose ordinary population of five-and-twenty thousand people receives during six weeks an addition of a million souls. He also suggested that it would be advisable to choose for our voyage the moment when the crowd of vessels was ascending the mighty stream; the sight, he had been told, was most curious; and another advantage was that there would just then be very few people descending the river, and we should be tolerably sure of good accommodation. The steamer, he added, belonged to an English company, and had an excellent reputation. This account was so encouraging that we almost determined to try the watery road; and Monsieur departed, promising to make all requisite inquiries respecting the times of sailing and the price of tickets.

Tempted by a glorious afternoon, and having obtained permission from the doctor, we dined earlier than usual, with the intention of driving to the Sparrow Hills, the scene of that half-groan, half-cry, which arose from the wearied French battalions, as, sinking on their knees, they crossed themselves, and uttered the word, "Moscow!" Crossing the stone bridge, we

passed through a number of quiet streets; and the busy part of the city was soon left behind. There were the empty market-places, in Winter well stocked with frozen animals, birds, fishes, and vegetables; there were monasteries, convents, and churches, some of the walls of which were covered with frescoes—coarse, indeed, but a great improvement upon the usual white and yellow wash. One beautiful belfry of many stories was most minutely decorated. From its lofty height, it looked down upon a many-cupola'd church, painted red. Another sacred edifice, attached to a convent, was all silver and dove-colour; gold stars and blue prevailed in a third; and there was many a green dome and roof scarcely to be distinguished from the fine foliage of the trees that clustered round them. Perpetual patches of bright colour and rich metal-work struck the eye, and the monotony of the long white walls was broken by frequent glimpses of cool green gardens.

Gradually the buildings became smaller, the houses poorer; we were fairly in the suburbs, and passing under a tall arched gateway of no particular merit, we got off the shaky stones, and were in the open country—a dreary waste of moorland. There were patches of bog, and

stains of rusty vegetation, with occasional unenclosed fields of sickly barley or uncared-for oats. The landscape was ungenial, even in the glowing Summer afternoon. To our left a sandy road dragged along the plain; for many a verst we could trace it on its way to Smolensk. The one we were upon was infamous, alternate ruts and stones jolting us against the side of the carriage, but no obstacle arrested the career of our powerful white steeds. The nearer we got to the river, the more unpleasant the road became; in places it was entirely washed or crumbled away, and then our fiery coursers improvised a route of their own. Fortunately, they did not lodge us in the river, but it was scarcely the road to choose for an invalid's first drive.

Following the course of the winding stream, the country became prettier, the banks were well wooded, and country houses, with towers and gardens, were embedded in the foliage. One of these, a villa of considerable size, belonged to the Empress, and is said to be a pretty place; but tickets are required by visitors, and for these we had not thought it worth while to apply, the chief merit of the interior being due to the upholsterer, and we had little

fancy for pink walls covered with goffered muslin. On the boggy plain, near the Smolensk road, rises an immense pile of building, girded in by high, grim walls, bristling with towers, and pierced by loop-holes, one of the priestly fortresses which form a band round Moscow. A red brick gateway led into a large enclosure, and we paused to enter for a moment. Within there were no less than five churches, besides towers, refectories, with frescoed sides, a flower-bedecked cemetery, buildings of all sorts and sizes—a little world, in fact, apart from every-day life. It was the Novospaski, or New Passion Monastery, which has occupied the present site since the year 1490. In its vaults are interred many members of the Romanoff family, amongst them Martha the Nun, the wife of the patriarch Philaret. Close to the gateway is a stone which records the death of the Princess Tasakonova, the unfortunate daughter of the Empress Elizabeth; but she is buried in a small cemetery in Moscow. The grand old walls are themselves famous in story. The monks once threw coats of mail over their frocks, and defended themselves stoutly against Divlet Ghirei, a Tartar Khan. Again they manned the towers successfully against the Poles. The most modern point is

the tall belfry, which was finished as late as the end of the last century.

Whilst still lingering in the precincts of the monastery, a loud clap of thunder warned us to prepare for a storm. Cloaks and umbrellas were hunted up, the hood lowered, the front seat secured from wet, and all made ship-shape just in time. Down came a torrent of rain! We handed up wraps to the unlucky commissionnaire George; and, each ensconced in a corner, prepared for an upset. On we tore, horses and men alike blinded by the pelting drift, plunging into one hole only to mount on one side and descend into another. At last the coachman could stand it no longer—he turned his carriage round under an old wall. We could scarcely see a yard before us. The lightning was blinding, and the thunder crashed right overhead. The tempest was too violent to last long; the number of seconds between the flash and the roll increased. A lull came, when the roar began again, but further off; and finally the black clouds rolled away in the direction of Smolensk. A ray of sunlight pierced through a rent in the sky, and, caught by the shower which had ceased to fall on us, formed a beautiful rainbow, which seemed so close that faith alone was wanting to enable us to seize the

golden goblet promised to the believer who is bathed in its rays. Then shawls were folded up again, umbrellas placed in a position to dry, and we had time to look at the fine old brick gateway which had afforded us shelter, and mark the bits of wall which cropped up around. George informed us that they were the remains of an ancient episcopal palace, which had perished during the French invasion.

Recommencing our journey, we passed the Krutitsakh Barracks, drove up a straggling village street, along which ran disjointed wooden houses, and arrived at our destination. The sun, sinking to rest, shone gloriously forth; down below lay the winding river, looped, until it seemed to have a treble bed; and across the far-stretching moorland, rose the wonderful old city in all its pride—the same "Holy Mother Moscow," the first sight of which had paled the cheek of Napoleon. It is said that for a moment his heart stood still when he beheld it; and he hissed out the word "Moscow!" through his clenched teeth. The goal of so much toil, ambition, and hoped-for vengeance, what a sight it must have been as the staff galloped up and paused upon the ridge! Then came the shouts of the wearied legions, "Moscow! Moscow!" thirsting as they were for food and shelter,

warmth and plunder. Again what a sight must the city in flames have presented from this spot —it would have realized one's idea of the destruction of a city in days of old. How full these tumble-down houses had been of trembling gazers! One of them was for some time inhabited by Napoleon himself. George pointed it out. The said George, by-the-by, spoke with an air of authority on the matter, his father having been, he said, a soldier of the Imperial Guard.

The superb city spread itself out over the plain, and rose upon its seven hills with indescribable majesty, an amphitheatre of towers, domes, and palaces. After the storm the air was wonderfully clear. Sunset is decidedly the favourable moment for the view from the Sparrow Hills, and now it threw its departing glory upon perhaps the most picturesque city in the world, bathing it in a flood of rose-coloured and amber light. In the centre of all this, and as if conscious of keeping guard over the whole, towered the long grim walls of the Kremlin, a black line above which rose spectral towers. As we gazed, the soft breeze brought on its wings the distant harmony of many bells; while those of the Novo Devichi convent, nearer, deeper, stronger than the others, chimed at our

feet. We drew a deep breath, and felt that we were rewarded for many a long day's journey, many an hour of sickness and fatigue. To our left the Moskva wondered away from its sheltering bank, and threaded its intricate course along a boundless waste of bog and moor. Here and there the curling smoke betrayed a village; but, built of unbarked wood, the rude cabins were not to be distinguished from the dark and dusty soil. The foreground was formed of the Devichi Palé, or Maiden's Field, the spot on which the people are entertained at coronations. The Novo Devichi convent is surrounded by high, red, dentellated walls, inside of which cluster a number of sombre buildings. It looks like a great prison; and as such it has, in fact, figured in history. Here Sophia, sister of Peter the Great, was interred in life and death, forced to take the veil under the name of Susannah, and strictly guarded. She now sleeps in the dismal vaults. Peter, at her death, expelled the holy sisters, and turned the building into a hospital for foundlings. But the latter, numbering at first only two hundred and fifty, became at last too numerous for the building, and the great establishment in the town was founded. In earlier times the soil around was crimsoned with Polish blood, some frightfully san-

guinary conflicts having taken place on these plains.

It is a most unpoetical (though highly practical) idea; but all the world over sight-seeing and eating are connected together, and we were consequently informed that the thing at the Sparrow Hills was to eat strawberries and cream, and that the inhabitants would consider themselves defrauded unless we partook of those delicacies. So, of course to gratify them, we consented. The cream was yellow, the sugar sweet, the berries crimson; and, to tell the truth, we considered the banquet a great addition to the charms of the surrounding landscape. There were a good many holiday people scattered about. Some of them strolled through the village; others, discovering steep winding paths, crept down to the bed of the river. My companion walked off to obtain a point of view, and I sat in the carriage, glad to watch in silence the lingering glow in the west, and the tiny flecks of golden cloud which so soon dwindled into black spots. The whole landscape had changed to a blueish grey before we turned our horses' heads homewards.

On reaching the suburbs, we were able to vary the route, passing by the University—a staring stucco building with great wings, built

by the Empress Elizabeth. It is considered a place of sound education, and at times numbers as many as 1600 students. The terms of admission are easy, and the cost moderate—fifty rubles a year covering the expense. It contains a fine library and an anatomical museum, which we did not visit. Among the curiosities of the latter is shown an instrument used by Peter the Great to extract teeth.

On our return to Moscow we found the town all alive, the Czar being announced as about to take up his abode for a short time in the Kremlin, *en route* to a Summer palace in the neighbourhood. It was nearly dark, and the people were beginning to suspend paper lamps in rows along the front of their houses. Some of the larger mansions were illuminated with crowns, eagles, and ciphers, the old, old designs; and on each of the many kerb-stones which protected the narrow way for pedestrians, was placed a blazing saucer of tallow. The stones are made flat at the top for this very purpose; but it is an unpleasant way of rejoicing, and the smell is abominable. We were unable to await the *entrée*, the hour being uncertain; but we drove to the Kremlin terrace, in order to look down upon the lit-up city, the aspect of which was very strange and beautiful—the stern Kremlin

alone exhibiting no signs of festivity. The night was balmly and fine, but the young moon had hid herself long ago. All was silent as the grave; not a sound arose to disturb the solemn sleepers near; visit the Kremlin at what hour you may, it is always grand, always impressive.

Not sorry to get home, we were just falling asleep ourselves, when a loud burst of bells—not "like sweet bells jangled out of tune"—announced the arrival of the Czar. The people of Moscow object to his being called the emperor: he is the "White Czar." The nobles are also white, the peasants black, according to an ancient Tartar distinction. Kriloff speaks of the "black" people he used to watch on the banks of the Volga. Presently old Ivan Veliki saluted his sovereign. Boom! boom! went the great bell—every metal tongue in the Kremlin struck up, and many a campanile responded. After a time the night once more sank into silence, and, under our protecting saint, we slept well after the labours and adventures of the day.

Being now able to walk once more, we set off to hunt for photograhs. The Moscow shops are good in this respect, and we found a charming collection at a picture-dealer's near at hand. Alas! they were expensive; we chose, however,

upwards of a dozen, and amongst them a magnificent view of the Kremlin, taken from the opposite side of the river. Surely the poet Pouchkin must have had this spot in his mind when he wrote "The Golden-headed Kremlin loves to repeat itself in the mirror of the calm flowing Moskva." In the photograph we purchased, the reflections in the water were curiously clear. The rustic picture-frames made in this country are quite original and worth buying, although they, too, cost money. The carving is good—representing the end of a Russian cottage. The picture is framed in the window, from which the lattices are thrown back. Some are gilded, others made of different coloured woods, and the rough logs and ornaments are finished with the utmost delicacy.

It was one of our great amusements to sit under the trees on the Boulevard, and watch the people as they passed by in an endless stream. There was nothing remarkable about the women—they are an undersized race, probably the consequence of their secluded life—with pale skins, light eyes, and not the slightest pretension to taste in their costume, the nurses only excepted. The men, on the contrary, are wonderfully tall, and their dresses more characteristic. The

Moujiks, who come in for a holiday, with their skirts tucked into their boots, complete their toilets by a red sash or leather belt, a wide-a-wake, and a long stick; in the country they swathe their legs like the peasants in the Campagna, and wear curious shoes made of bark. The well-to-do cit has his shirt of crimson or blue Persian silk, and his surtuk of velvet. They are muscular men, and wear their fair hair long; whilst at work they fasten it back with a ribbon. Many have beards—the Old Religionists as a matter of course, for one of their many grievances against Peter was his hostility to that appendage, and his consequent wish to see his subjects clean shaven.

From fifty men of different countries you could pick out the true Ruski by their eyes. They resemble no other eyes, their colour being most peculiar; it is a light red, golden brown, something like the colour of the treacle the French call *goutte d'or*. Many a ray from the East mingles with their colder temperament. It is most remarkable that the eyes of the women are usually blue or grey; and it became quite a source of interest to us to remark and authenticate this fact as the crowd passed by. "The blood of nine-tenths of the present Muscovite population," says Dr. Latham, "is Ugrian

on the mother's side; the Ugrians being a people indigenous to the soil of Russia, a population akin to the present inhabitants of Finland." The word "Ugrian" is Russian, and means "borderer," a native of some Sclavonic frontier.

We had tickets of admission to the treasury, but my illness had hitherto prevented us from using them, and we determined to spend the following morning there. Meanwhile, we took our books to the shady porch of "St. Basil the Beautiful," and, surrounded by memorials of the past, read about some of the treasures we were to see—the jewelled crowns of Kazan and Astrakhan, and many precious relics which had belonged to Ivans III. and IV.; and, pondering over the strange ceremonials of these almost Oriental courts, prepared ourselves pleasantly and profitably for inspecting the originals.

CHAPTER XI.

Visit to the Treasury—The Sokolniki, or People's Park—Winter Palace of the Nobility—Popes and their Wives—Russian Army—Character of the Russian People—Music in the Army—Favourite Airs and Choruses—Condition of the Soldiers—The Foundling Hospital—Horror of Vaccination—Washing as an Art—Marriages of the Peasants—The Imperial Palace—Halls of the Russian Orders of Knighthood—Museums.

THE next morning we presented ourselves at the Oùrjeinaya Páláta, or Treasury, the entrance-hall of which is large and the staircase handsome. The collection is arranged in four rooms, of which the octagon chamber contains the most valuable relics, and is guarded by massive iron gates. A guide quickly marking us as his own, we shook our heads and pointed to Murray, a novelty to Muscovites; but all in vain, for he persisted in attaching himself to us, and continued to pour forth a monotonous flow

of information in Russian. However, a little more head-shaking and half a ruble delivered us from our tormentor. The crowns and thrones shown here are exactly what crowns and thrones ought to be, and seldom are, excepting in story-books and twelfth-night characters. They belonged to the good old times when Kings and Queens wore the one and sat upon the other. However, these are comfortable days, and we know that "uneasy lies the head that *wears* a crown." We looked with interest at the patent and Order of the Garter sent by Queen Elizabeth to her ferocious suitor, Ivan IV. Curious that this same Ivan should be the first crowned head to think of finding an asylum on our shores, in case of a rising amongst his own subjects.

An official drew our attention to the smooth, iron-shod stick of Ivan, which remains to remind the visitor of that amiable Czar, who, when in a facetious mood, thought it good fun to pin to the ground the foot of an unfortunate attendant. It is said that this is the very stick which terminated the life of the unfortunate Tsarevitch —unfortunate, not in dying, but in having lived his short life at the mercy of such a tyrant. Formerly the Treasury is said to have been larger than it is now, but it has been

moved several times to places of safety, on each occasion suffering loss.

Our good doctor offered to escort us to the Sokolniki; or People's Park, and as we walked through the wide streets he pointed out some of the houses belonging to the most considerable people in Moscow. Many were Winter-palaces belonging to nobles, who, having great estates in the country, had now deserted their town residences; but the abodes of the rich merchants still showed signs of life. Attached to some were beautiful gardens and conservatories. Our friend told us that these houses were superbly furnished, as far as upholsterers' work was concerned; but he added that, in a room fitted up with crimson velvet, the commonest engravings and daubs of paintings would line the walls, anything like art being confined to the richly-gilded frames. These dwellings were scattered along the street, separated perhaps by half-a-dozen low, yellow-painted wooden houses, a wine-store, or a green-headed church, and the general effect was greatly enhanced by contrast.

The Moscow folks-garden is a small park, prettily laid out in shady alleys. A lake, which occupied the centre, was gay with sailing boats and paddling canoes, some of which bore painted

and coloured lanterns. As the evening stole on, many a light streamed over the water and twinkled through the trees, and the swans and water-fowl skimmed along, leaving long tracks in their wake. It was very pleasant. Crowds passed by as we sat under the trees; burly Popes, in green satin robes, dishevelled hair, flapping hats, and long sticks, were escorting their fat placid wives (the Popes take great care of their wives), followed by a train of children of all ages. Many of them were fine-looking men, and, our friend told us, as a class much more polished than their country brethren. There were tall, bearded men with golden eyes, and diademed nurses with butterfly children. Now and then a Zingari of dusky hue passed by, her hair confined by a bright yellow silk handkerchief, and her eyes glowing like live coals from under her low forehead and strong black eyebrows. As each stern, smooth-shaven, grey-coated soldier came along, we looked to see if he wore the simple cross of lead, the greatest honour that Russia can bestow upon a son—the Grand Cross of St. George; corresponding to our own Victoria Cross, and given indiscriminately to men and officers. This decoration was gained by the late Emperor under fire in the Turkish

war. The Cossacks were distinguished by the long rows of cartridge cases which sloped across their breasts, many of which were ornamented by beautifully wrought silver; but we watched in vain for the red-stockinged soldiers of Tchernikoff's regiment, privileged to wear this distinction from having waded knee-deep in blood at the battle of Poltava.

Every fifteenth man in the Russian empire is a soldier, either in active service or liable to be called out; a curious fact in a country where the people are said, by those who know them well, to be the most peacable race on the face of the earth. If they quarrel amongst themselves they never fight, and hold all sorts of cruel sports in abhorrence; they are very brave, and bear suffering with patience, and death without fear. The main body of the army is drawn from the thirty-four millions of people in Great Russia, of which Moscow is the centre. Both officers and soldiers are very religious, and a priest, with a moveable chapel, accompanies each battalion. There are a great number of musicians in the army, the soldiers are fond of singing in parts, and always join in a hymn after the rappel has beaten. One favourite chorus is, "The weapon of the soldier is the bayonet;" another taken from Suvaroff's catechism, runs, "The

bayonet is a hero, the musket is a fool." The greater part of the Russian army is raised by conscription; the children of a soldier belong to the state, and the boys are brought up in a military training establishment. The state encourages marriage amongst the soldiers and the wives and children of those sent to Georgia, the Caucasus, and Siberia, or other distant places, accompany the troops, and receive an allowance. If a wife does not follow her husband, and has no news of him for five years, she may marry again.

The late Emperor greatly bettered the condition of the soldier by diminishing his time of active service, and decreeing that every man should have the right of indefinite leave after ten or fifteen years' service, according to the part of the Empire from which he came; but he still remains liable to be called out on accidental occasions, and may have to travel a couple of thousand miles in order to appear at a review. Amongst the many reforms introduced by the present Emperor, that of the army has been by no means neglected, and now the health and food of the men is strictly attended to. In the time of the Emperor Nicholas, the deaths amongst the conscripts numbered fifty per cent. As it is, the soldier's life is hard but not hope-

less. If he rises to be a non-commissioned officer, he, after twelve years' service, becomes ennobled, receives his commission, or retires with a pension. A considerable number of the officers in the Russian army have risen from the ranks; and all who receive direct commissions are obliged to serve as non-commissioned officers for two years, and are called Younkers; but those who have gone through military schools are allowed to continue their studies during their state of probation. The same grey coat is the garment of officers and men, but the cloth of the former is much finer than that of the private.

Before returning home, we made an appointment with our friend for the next day, when he promised to take us over the Foundling Hospital, of which he was first physician. Its vast exterior is seen from the Kremlin terrace, and always reminded us of the Escurial, minus the handle. Of the latter building, Ford remarks that "it looks like a lunatic asylum, big enough to shelter every madman in Spain." And certainly this hospital appeared sufficiently large to provide for the wants of every foundling in Russia; but the next day's experience enlarged our ideas.

Punctually at two o'clock arrived the doctor,

in full military costume. Putting us on a drosky, and following in his own, off we set, raising clouds of dust at every step, as we bumped in and out of concealed ruts, in anything but an agreeable manner. On arriving, we were introduced into the registry-office, where great books, as much as a man could lift, were ranged round the walls. Whenever an infant is presented the questions asked are: Has the child been baptised, and by what name? Is it legitimate or illegitimate, the two categories being drafted off into separate corridors. The child is then registered, a number, never to be parted with, is hung round its neck, a duplicate is placed upon the cot it is to occupy, and a receipt given to the bearer, in which the number is specified, and by which it can be claimed up to the age of ten years, and traced afterwards. This done, the child is handed to a nurse, and the mother often contrives to obtain the office. Wet nurses are not scarce in Russia; and there are always numbers of young women in waiting, thankful to receive a small allowance, good food, and hospital clothing.

An officer was desired to produce two books for our inspection, and requested to state the number of children admitted during the pre-

vious year, which proved to be eleven thousand and eighty-five. We no longer wondered at the size of the building. In the second book there was an order, signed by Napoleon, for the admittance of two boys. After inspecting the quality of the bread, tasting the soup, and admiring the shining coppers and handsome kitchen, we were shown into a room with a leathern couch on one side, and on the other, to our surprise, six beautiful little calves, each in its separate stall. In this room the children are vaccinated. Vaccination is compulsory; but the doctor remarked that in the country the peasant women had such a horror of it that they frequently endeavoured to bribe the medical officer to pass their infants over.

Washing is an art in this establishment. A large hall, kept at a certain temperature, is filled with little coppers, which are lined with flannel. A down pillow is attached to each, on which, when dried, the child is swaddled. England herself, with all her cleanliness, might take a lesson in this bath-room. Chambers are set aside for different maladies. In one of these there is a graduated light, and to it are transferred all infants with imperfect sight. The upper part of the building was reserved for the baby-nurseries and dormitories, and a pretty

sight they were, with row after row of clean beds for the nurses, and white cots for the children. Each child had a separate nurse, except in the case of twins, when the woman, seated in a low chair, would hold one in her arms, the other being stretched out between her extended legs, and in that position each of her charges was rocked in turns to sleep. The nurses were gaily dressed, with scarlet petticoats and velvet diadems, large, fair, blue-eyed women, some of whom were very handsome, but, somehow or other, they were too like cows to be pleasant. The babies were soft, downy little things, looking as content as possible; and we never heard a single cry. The hospital was not full. It being Summer-time, numbers of children had been sent into the country, some placed at great farms belonging to the establishment, others boarded out.

Each year the corridors and chambers are thoroughly cleansed, painted, and whitewashed. The class-rooms were empty. The boys, as they grow up, are exempt from military service, most of them becoming agricultural labourers. Some, however, both boys and girls, the most promising being chosen, return to Moscow, where the former are educated at the industrial school, the latter becoming servants

in the establishment; or, if clever, educated there to become governesses. If either sex receives such an education as to fit them for teachers, they are bound to give up to Government their first three years of independence, and to teach in the national schools now organized all over the country.

The size of this hospital is truly astonishing. There are miles of corridor, and yet it is insufficient for the requirements of the number of children presented, which increases greatly each year, and their reception becomes a dilemma to the government. Much as it desires to increase the population of Russia, to people its vast steppes and endless plains, the great district round Moscow yields children too freely to be locally convenient. There is also a maternal hospital connected with the place, which provides gratuitous accommodation for about two hundred poor women, and admits as many as four thousand paying patients, who desire to be received secretly. It is considered an excellent school for that particular branch of medicine, and provides instruction for nurses.

Mr. G—— informed us that the peasant women generally marry at sixteen, the men at eighteen, the average number of children in a family

being seventeen, of whom one-half perish in infancy—some from cold, others from the use of the saska, a milk poultice, tied up in a long bag, at which the infants, left alone for hours, suck away, often so effectually that they draw the saska down into the throat, and are suffocated.

As we were taking our evening stroll the same day, not far from the Moskvaretsk Bridge, we saw the people stopping to gaze at a cloud of dust in the distance, out of which presently emerged a long train of carriages. In one of these, a chariot drawn by six black horses, sat the Czar, as far as we could make out, a pale, thoughtful, stiff-looking man; the Czaritsa, placed on the far side, we scarcely saw. Then came another chariot and six, with the Princess Dagmar,* and a lady. They were all in very low dresses, and wore nothing on their necks. We did not think the Russian Princess so pretty as our own, but the evening was oppressive, all the carriage-windows were closely shut to

* The Princess Dagmar, on entering the bosom of the Eastern Church, could no longer retain the name given to her by her Lutheran sponsors. Her original baptism held good, but she had to go through the solemn ceremony of Adult Unction before she could become a member of the Greco-Russian Church.

exclude the dust, which lay several inches deep on the road. The position could not have been altogether agreeable, and excused a fatigued expression. Other carriages followed with the suite, a gay cortége, but, like everything around, spoiled by dust—horses, liveries, carriages, all being powdered to a dirty grey. We stole away into the shady walks at the foot of the Kremlin, and sat down under the trees, with the great green velvet rampart in front, over which peeped the gold and silver domes of the cathedrals; all we could see of its many buildings, excepting here and there a bit of time-worn battlement, or a tall red tower, rising in lessening stages until its tapering top terminated in Sophia's Black Eagle.

We sat until the chimes from above the Sacred Gate, and the burst of bells near and far, warned us that it was time to be home, so we crept under the archway, sternly regarded by the tall grey man, who had a medal which told of the Crimea on one side of his coat, and a roughly-placed patch on the other, went along by the black shadow of St. Basil, paused to see if the ghost of Ivan was doing penance in the Lobnoé Mesto, passed out of the Red Place through an old Gothic doorway, with a Holy Mother above it, made visible by the glimmer of

a ruby-coloured lamp, and found ourselves once more in the busy world.

Having a ticket to view the palace, we presented it one morning, and were graciously admitted by a nice old man in scarlet and gold. Almost the whole of the immense pile was built by Nicholas. There are, however, a few chambers still existing which belonged to the Palace of Ivan III. "Scratch the Russian, and the Tartar will appear," said the Prince de Ligne. It may or may not be true, but scratch many a modern Russian palace, and a bit of Tartar architecture will be found embedded in it. The entrance-hall is supported by fine pillars of Finland granite. A small suite of private apartments are the first shown. They are comfortable and handsome, but contain little that is remarkable. In the Emperor's cabinet one large picture represents the French leaving the Kremlin, others the battles of Borodino and Smolensk, and on a marble slab stands an exquisite equestrian statuette of the First Napoleon in bronze. But the pride of this magnificent palace are the halls of the orders of St. George, St. Alexander Nevsky, St. Andrew, St. Catherine, and St Vladimir. Occasionally these fine halls are all thrown open at once, and the whole of the knights and ladies are assembled. The spectacle

must be truly superb. Imagination can paint nothing more gorgeous in the way of earthly pomp.

We entered first the hall dedicated to the military Order of St. George. St. George, now the patron saint of all the Russias, originally figured on the escutcheon of Moscow alone, when an independent principality, and, as then represented, rode over a blood-red ground mounted on a white horse. When Moscow became the capital of the Grand Princes, they adopted these arms, the writhing dragon being added by Dmitri Donskoi, after his victory over the Tartars; and when Sophia brought from Constantinople her double black eagle, it was changed with the previous arms. The hall in question is two hundred feet in length, and the names of the regiments and nobles who have received the decoration are inserted in letters of gold upon the walls of white scagliola; the effect of the furniture in the colours of the Order, orange and black, is curious.

The hall of the Order of St. Alexander Nevsky, founded in 1788, is equally magnificent. The walls are decorated with pictures representing the principal events in the life of the sainted warrior. The colours of this Order are pink and gold. The grandest of all is the

hall of the Knights of St. Andrew, an order established by Peter the Great in 1698. On its walls figure the arms of the twenty-nine Russian provinces, and in it, draped in the deep blue of the Order, stands the throne. On great occasions this hall is all ablaze, lit up by a fabulous number of wax candles; without exception, it was the grandest room we had ever seen. Near to it is the Hall of St. Catherine, in which stands the throne of the Empress, and from it she bestows that decoration on her ladies in memory of the preservation of Peter the Great from the Turks by the wit and good management of his Catherine. The fittings up are in light blue. The smallest of the five, but the most interesting, is a fine hall, part of the old building, dedicated to St. Vladimir. It has a curious painted and groined roof. The walls are decorated, and the room itself is fitted up with black and red—appropriate colours, which might well be those of the wide staircase which opens from it, and has been the theatre of terrible events. On the top of these stairs, called the Red or Beautiful, stood Ivan the Terrible, gazing with frenzied horror at the comet which he believed to be a supernatural messenger sent to announce his death. Here, too, with his iron-shod staff, he transfixed the

foot of Prince Kurbski's unfortunate messenger. Down this red staircase, and into the court below, was flung the bleeding body of the false Demetrius, in 1606. On these steps the Streltsi cut to pieces the Boyar Matvezeff; and up these stairs ascended Napoleon and his staff to take short-timed possession of the Kremlin. It is a spot teeming with memories; if we could have conjured up at our choice one of these past scenes, it should have been that when the terrible Ivan stood gazing at the comet, which was so innocently pursuing its appointed course.

A banqueting-hall, restored by Nicholas, and built by Ivan the Great, is one of the most interesting rooms in the palace. Curious patterns, of Tartar origin, stain the walls in deep colours; the ribs of the vaulted roof spring from a huge round pillar in the centre. The pillar itself is also used as a jorka, and encircled by shelves, which groan with the weight of Imperial plate. This is used as the banqueting-hall at the coronation feast. In the corner, according to Eastern custom, sits the newly-crowned Czar, clad in his royal robes, his crown upon his head, his orb and sceptre by his side. There he feasts for the first and last time; for when that corner shall be occupied

again, his spirit will have passed away—his body will be of no more account than that of the humblest servant who waits upon him, and another Czar will wear his crown. Near the top of the room there is a window, so small that it is scarcely visible; it reminded one of the windows occasionally seen in some old college hall, put there in order that the master might keep his eye upon the boyish scholars, who were bound by the university statutes not to play at marbles on the steps of the Senate-house. But this window was meant for the Imperial ladies, who, excluded from the feast, could thus get a peep at the banquet.

A set of rooms, called the Terem, were, according to a custom derived from the East, which was kept up until the time of Nicon, set apart for the ladies of the family. This suite resembles in its minute proportions the chambers in the Romanoff House, each floor decreasing in size, until they terminate in a single room. The ground and first-floor were built in the early part of the sixteenth century; the upper ones were added in 1686. A staircase, carved in scrolls, led to the dining-room, a low, broad room, which contained some curiosities—such as old charters, caskets full of state documents, the seals of

Ivan IV., and of other Ivans, and the box which guards the act of election of Mikhail Romanoff to the throne of Muscovy.

All these chambers were low, vaulted, groined and painted in rich, but somewhat grim colours, which suited well with their antiquity. The upper stories contained pleasant, sunny rooms, in which many a Tzaritsa had sat with her children at her knee; and there were small oratories, where they had prayed for their welfare. Alexis, Theodore, and John were brought up in the Terem, and it had been occasionally occupied by Peter the Great, whose head must certainly, here and there, have touched the ceiling. The last occupant was his unfortunate son Alexis. The windows of the Terem overlook a courtyard, in the middle of which stands a very small church, the unpretending parent of every church in Moscow, the Spass na Borù, or Church of the Redeemer in the Wood. This small edifice, with wooden walls, and green bulbous domes, once nestled in the forest which crowned the highest of Moscow's seven hills. The monks who rang its bells are dead, its sheltering trees are gone, but the splendid modern palace, and the deeply religious feelings of its owners, still gird it safely round. Long may the Spass na Borù survive!

There were other suites of rooms, both public and private, very magnificent, but not particularly interesting; as well as a picture-gallery, the paintings in which were all of the modern Russian school, the subjects historical, and on a very large scale. One or two of these were curious, as pointing out that the Eastern custom of leaving the shoes at the door, on entering the apartment of a superior, prevailed at the courts of the early Czars. One corridor was delightfully arranged as a Winter garden; tall mirrors reflected the long cool velvety leaves, and jets of water, that threw up their spray, descended into beds containing every variety of moss and grass. It was a charming retreat, and we longed to have easy-chairs and books, and install ourselves in it for the rest of the day. But, alas! no such peaceful pleasures awaited us. We had to hand tea-money to our good old guide, and turn out in a glare of sunshine which was positively blinding, and wend our way home through the deep dust which at each step arose in clouds.

We found our friend the Consul waiting for us. He brought news respecting the steamers, one of which was to sail from Nijni to Astrakhan in the middle of the following week. He had also procured the "tara," or price of

provisions on board—alas! in the Russian character, and all but unintelligible to us. The idea of having to choose a dinner from that thing! He laughed at our dismay; but still it seemed an impossibility, and visions of future starvation rose up before us. Taking, however, a pencil, the good-natured Frenchman proceeded to make a translation of the most necessary articles. One whole division meant drinkables. With the word "chai" we proudly declared ourselves acquainted; but it was accompanied by another, which was a puzzler. It turned out to be "staken," which signifies glass. The words soda-water might have stood for the name of a Greek philosopher, or school of learning, they looked so hard. After some consultation, it was agreed that he should secure accommodation at Nijni Novgorod for a certain day, which would give us time to see the fair, and also write to secure a separate cabin for two in the Wednesday's boat. The shorter our time became, the more fondly we attached ourselves to Moscow, and heartily regretted the necessity for leaving it; but our stay had already extended to near a month, and it was time to be moving, or run the risk of encountering rough seas and equinoctial gales.

There are two museums in the town of Mos-

cow. The Rumiantsoff contains a number of valuable MSS., archives, and papers, but they are not exposed under glass, like the magnificent collection in Paris, or the smaller one in St. Petersburg. Another museum, the Galitsin, possesses also a good library, some pretty good Dutch paintings, and a little jug—the only piece of Henri II. ware in all Russia. But we visited neither of these places—we preferred the gardens, the churches, the treasures of the Kremlin; and had long since ceased to think it necessary to visit what to us had no particular interest. Sometimes we got reproached for idleness, or want of taste, in which case we always quoted the somewhat remarkable fact that Sir Walter Scott, having passed three weeks in Rome, left the city without ever attempting to see the galleries of the Vatican. He had no interest in men of marble—he preferred the living breathing specimens of old Rome, to be found in the Trastevera, or the Campagna. But we did regret the morsel of Henri II.; and had the way been shorter, the sun less scorching, the Kremlin less attractive, we should have paid our respects to it.

CHAPTER XII.

The Troitsa Monastery—Criminals setting off for Siberia—The Pilgrimage to Troitsa—Monastic System of Russia—Cathedral of the Assumption—Pictures of St. Sergius—Refectory of St. Radonejski—The Holy Well—The Treasury of Troitsa—Visit to the Ateliers—Occupations and Productions of the Monks—Russian Roads—The Hermitage of Gethsemane—Hermits in Russia—Chai—Alarming Incident.

FEW people could be in Moscow and not wish to see the famous Troitsa (or Trinity) Monastry, and we begged George to arrange the expedition for us. Taking an early breakfast, therefore, we drove to the distant railway-station, but passing through one of the principal gates, our progress was arrested by an advancing crowd. As it drew hear, we perceived that those in the front were criminals chained together, and strictly guarded; they were substantially dressed, in suits of brown woollen; behind them staggered a motley group of some thirty men at

liberty, and the rear was brought up by baggage-carts, on which women and children were perched—a wild, mournful crew, with a file of soldiers on either side. George informed us that it was a caravan setting off for Siberia. Siberia! the word was painful; we thought of the story of "Elizabeth," and many another nursery history, and wondered what wild frozen plains they might be going to inhabit. We felt very sorry for them—a degree of sympathy which, our doctor afterwards informed us, was quite wasted, only the worst criminals being sent to the mines. Those condemned for lighter offences are drafted off as agricultural labourers, who receive wages for their work; and the men we saw at liberty were settlers, encouraged to go by gifts of money and land.

Nor is the journey painful; the march of these caravans is limited to fourteen miles a day, and those not consecutive; they must every third day, and are not required to proceed in bad weather. In case of illness, they are left at a station, and well cared for. The government greatly values these lives, being most anxious to populate the vast steppes which roll on to the Asiatic frontiers. In many parts of Siberia the Summer is fine, the gardens gay, and it has not been unusual

for families sent into exile for a few years to petition to remain when their term has expired, and beg to be allowed to stay and cultivate the lands which have been allotted to them. Some of these exiles occupy places of trust and distinction.

Troitsa is distant from Moscow some forty miles. The road to it is cut through the heart of the wild Muscovy forests; and very beautiful they are, the growth of the timber being finer than any we had previously seen. Sombre pines rose to a prodigious height, emitting the most delicious odour; and long stretches of stalwart oaks and grand old beeches afforded constant variety. For the first twenty miles the good people of Moscow had taken advantage of this luxuriant vegetation, and built a succession of châlets, great and small, with overhanging eaves, open galleries, balconies, and staircases carved and pierced in patterns of endless variety, and sheltered by tall trees, with gardens only separated from the forest by oak palings, which kept the wild-flowers, heather, and tall ferns at bay. They were abodes to covet on a hot Summer's day. Half way we stopped for a few minutes, and George brought us an earthen pot full of fresh wild strawberries. We spread the crimson berries on the cool

green leaves and ate away, aided by a paper knife and a bit of stick, for we had no wish to stain hands which had no chance of a washing for many an hour to come.

After this halt the country became more open, and was dotted with villages and shrines—spots where the pilgrims rest who flock to this holy monastery from far and near. The great Catherine herself came there on foot, and even in the present day many a noble walks from Moscow to make an offering or claim a blessing at the holy shrines. But all devout pilgrims stop at Holkoff, where repose the bones of the father and mother of St. Sergius, and unless due reverence be paid to their memory, and a prayer first whispered over their lowly bed, a visit to the final shrine is of no avail. We had female pilgrims in our carriage; probably their sacred errand entitled them to ride in a first-class compartment, for they were evidently poor. About eight miles from Troitsa they all got out, and we could see them wending their way in a string over the flat plain to a large building, which we were told was a famous nunnery, containing precious shrines and holy relics. The pile was surrounded by high walls, and, judging from the bulk of the five cupolas which crowned it, the size of the church must have

been considerable: the middle dome swelled out like a great balloon. Into these cloisters the votaries must enter with free will and cool judgment; no vows imprudently made either by parents or wives, to forsake their husbands or children, are accepted. "Such resolutions," says the Greek church, "are displeasing to God."

Troitsa, the most famous monastery in Russia, was founded by the holy hermit, Sergius, in 1357, shortly before the terrible pest called the Black Death. This convent, as time passed, increased rapidly in wealth and grandeur; twenty monasteries owned its sway, and in the year 1764 the Archimandrite, or Abbot, was lord over 106,000 male serfs. There are no varieties of monastic orders in Russia; they are simply divided into monks and hermits, under the rule of St. Basil. Before a man can enter a monastery, he must be free from all worldly obligations, such as the public service, the tie of marriage, or the authority of a master, and have no account to settle with justice. The chief of a monastery is called an Archimandrite, the rest of the body being the probationers, the proficients, and the perfect. The first wear black cassocks and hoods of camel's hair; the next add an upper cloak; the third are veiled,

and never suffer their faces to appear. Some of these monks are very rich, and they have the right of making wills.

Before the train stopped, we caught sight of long stretches of red wall, over which rose towers, cupolas, belfries, and spires, in clustered confusion—a mass of queer colours and points. At the station we had to wait a few minutes whilst George struck a bargain for a carriage. The half-mile of road which led to the monastery was up an ascent; it was deep in dust, and positively dangerous, from concealed holes and ruts. In a photograph which we afterwards purchased, it looks like a river without light or reflections. It would be impossible for a stranger to enumerate the various buildings which compose this vast monastic fortress, in which the very essence of the civil and religious life of Muscovy has been fostered and protected. The walls which enclose them are 4,500 feet round, and in some places they are twenty feet thick; they are built in the form of an octagon, and a tower, half Tartar, half Gothic, guards each corner. The walls themselves are high, crenellated, strengthened by trenches, and encircled by a deep moat; their vast embrace contains no less than ten churches, a palace—for the Archimandrite of Troitsa

keeps princely state—a university (Dean Stanley has called Troitsa the Oxford of Russia), refectories, dormitories, and shops, ateliers for painting, printing, and photography, cemeteries, pleasure-grounds, and outlying buildings for the accommodation of the numerous bands of pilgrims who come flocking to its shrine. There are prisons, also, to tell that all is not peace and charity.

Outside the red brick walls stretched long rows of wooden huts and booths, and the busy stir of human life gave the scene all the appearance of a fair. We promised ourselves ten minutes, later in the day, in which to ransack these stalls, which looked gay enough in passing; and driving under the high arched entrance, built deep and strong in order to protect the drawbridge, we entered the vast enclosure. The inside of the walls was lined with beautiful beds of flowers, from which arose tombs of pure white marble;—a cemetery where sleep the noble and the great. A funeral at Troitsa is a costly luxury, but a Russian will give much to rest in the earth blessed and rendered holy by St. Sergius. The great quadrangle presented the gayest of scenes; the walls of the churches were frescoed, as well as those of the refectories and dormitories; there were deep reds,

yellows, and greens—colour, in fact, everywhere—the very atmosphere had borrowed a glow; and there were patches of soft turf, with clumps of shady trees, and the cool plash of water struck upon the ear. All was life and sunshine. Lanky probationers were filling copper vessels of antique form at the well; the proficients lounging in the shade, studying their Sclavonic bibles, and digesting their early dinners. Sulphur-coloured and blue butterflies fluttered about, birds chirped, and the cats sat watching them with pointed ears, eager eyes, and quivering jaws. We wondered if the same sort of tranquil restlessness had ever prevailed in the old ruined monasteries over the seas, in Crowland or Fountains Abbey.

Leaving the carriage in a corner, we first entered the Cathedral of the Assumption, which was fine, with great bulbous domes. Russian churches soon become as monotonous to the eye as mosques; this one, however, had memories to render it interesting. Behind its altar, in a place sacred from the foot of woman, was the mother of Peter permitted to seek safety from the fury of the Streltsi. Down crouched the mother and the son—the latter a child of ten years old; the enraged soldiers flashed their swords above them; the fate of

Peter, the birth of Petersburg, trembled in the balance. It was decided by one short sentence: "Comrades, not before the altar." The weapon fell harmless, fresh troops rushed in, and, for good or for evil, Peter was saved to Russia. An altar in this church was pointed out to us which had been consecrated in 1609, during the Polish investment; it was devoted to prayer against the scourge of scurvy, by which disease three thousand of the inmates of the monastery had been carried off. What must have been the number of members it counted, if it could lose three thousand and still exist? The small church of the Trinity is the oldest of all. The door stands open in order to display the costly shrine of St. Sergius, in pure silver, and weighing nearly a thousand pounds. The bones of the holy man are dimly seen through sheets of crystal. The lights which glimmer around are never extinguished, and night and day a monk stands near reading prayers, in a low, monotonous flow of Sclavonic. We listened to the sound for some time; but the language is not so musical as the liquid Russian tongue.

There are two pictures of the saint painted on the boards of his coffin; one of these accompanied Alexis, and afterwards Peter, to battle, and was reared upon the bloody field of Poltava.

Alexander I. was also blest with this image. We saw a curious representation of the Last Supper here; all the figures were in pure gold, encrusted with precious stones, excepting that of Judas, which was rudely worked in brass. A still smaller chapel near is built over the cell in which the Virgin, St. Peter, and St. Paul appeared to the monk Sergius. Passing out we heard chaunting in a large building to the right, the Radonejski church; entering which, we stood in a corner to listen to the harmony of the sweet mellow voices. Against the opposite wall stood a row of dark, motionless figures, the thin white hands clasped to their breasts alone indicating that they were living, thinking human beings. No glimpse of their features could we obtain; their veils were down—they were "The Perfect." What strange men! How little could we imagine their manner of life, or train of thought!—to us they were solemn, mysterious shadows.

A very large refectory, in which numbers of pilgrims are fed, is attached to St. Radonejski; long, narrow, ashen tables occupied the hall, where all was silent, the dinner-hour, eleven o'clock, being past. It was a pleasant, sunny place, reminding one of Italy; the roof was arched and lofty, the windows, confined to one

side, were large, and the walls curiously covered with frescoes. One whole side was occupied with a representation of the Polish invaders, manfully opposed by the monks, who stood on the battlements with shirts of mail over their frocks. They were assisted by a host of holy spirits, who appeared in white robes between earth and sky, with threatening arms and long fingers pointed at their adversaries, who are seen to faint under the terror caused by the appearance of the shrouded figures. From a cloud St. Sergius cheers them on, and, with a great cross in his extended hand, waves back the soldiers of the Latin church.

We had mounted into the refectory by flights of broad shallow steps, and were now invited to descend into the kitchens beneath, a wilderness of tables, copper and fish kettles, amongst which not all our wish to be amiable could induce us to remain. The smell was sickening, and we turned so pale that George judiciously proposed a visit to the Holy Well, from which we drank very long draughts, that were more refreshing than safe. Drawn up from a great depth, the water arrived at the surface so intensely cold that its bright purity was instantaneously hidden by the dew which gathered

on the glass; it is supposed, however, to cure all maladies. The well itself, originally dug by the hands of Sergius, was afterwards choked up and forgotten, but burst forth again of its own accord, on some occasion when the monastary was suffering from the want of fresh water. A pretty building, with a groined roof, covers the spring, and several small objects for sale were arranged on shelves; amongst them little pictures of St. Sergius, well worked and curious. In front there stood a large stone basin, containing about a foot of water; the bottom was strewn with small pieces of money, thrown in by the pilgrims who came to bathe. Crossing the court in the direction of the treasury, we passed a church of various colours and grotesque form, in which we recognised the taste of old Ivan Vassilivitch; he it was who laid its first stone in person, in order to celebrate the final victory over Kazan.

The relics and jewels in the treasury at Troitsa are almost as valuable as those belonging to the cathedral of the Assumption at Moscow, and much of the same description. Ecclesiastical robes, stiff with precious stones and pearls, afford a great contrast to the simple frock of coarse brown wool worn by St. Sergius, which is placed in a case along with

his wooden cup and staff; objects of more veneration to the humble pilgrim who comes from afar to adore them, than all the wealth of pearls, rubies, and sapphires showered upon the costly raiment, books, and caskets, gifts from sovereigns and princes. To Troitsa Catherine II. presented the head-dress of pearl she wore at her coronation; its intrinsic value is great, but it is tasteless and heavy. It is occasionally worn at grand services, but how the priest contrives to wear it, is a mystery. This treasury is particularly rich in sapphires (pearls we had seen in such profusion that we had ceased to care about them); they form crosses and ornament cups, and are very brilliant and deep in colour. One most magnificent object is the cover or case which contains a copy of the Scriptures presented by the Czar Mikhail; it is made of green enamel wrought into arabesques, and in the centre glitters the Greek cross, formed of sapphires, rubies, and rosy pearls. Another volume is shown, which is really a marvel of delicacy and finish; the writing is in gold on vellum, so thin as to be transparent; this is also a copy of the Scriptures. The gift of Boris Godunoff is very grand—also an altar-cloth of golden tissue, embroidered with precious stones, amongst which are brilliants "that Jews might kiss, and infidels adore."

We were not sorry to leave all this barbaric grandeur, getting painfully tired of those precious stones, and feeling much more at home amongst the photographs and paintings. In order to reach the atelier we had to pass through a quiet court, ascending and descending shallow flights of time-worn steps which led to the corridors, running inside the battlements. One side was open to the court; on the other, great patches of sunlight came dancing through the loopholes, making the shade cheerful. The galleries were paved with red brick in the herring-bone pattern, and must have been pleasant promenades in which to pass a thoughtful hour. The photographs were very curious, most of them being taken from the monastery—its shrines, eikons, and treasures. We bought several, and amongst them the holy image of St. Sergius, and one or two of dusky Virgins, miraculous images celebrated in story. We next visited the studio of painting. Some of the monks are very good figure painters, and all the really artistic, ecclesiastical pictures—such as we had seen at Viborg, St. Isak's, or St. Alexander Nevsky's—come from Troitsa, or some other great monastery.

The monks were at work before their easels, busily employed upon the smooth boards of

wood. As they sat in their monastic robes, with the light streaming upon their shaven crowns and close-cropped heads, all so silent and so grave, they might have been taken for monks of the olden time illuminating precious manuscripts. Amongst the quiet group a Fra Angelico might have been picturing a heavenly host. It was a curious old-world scene—in itself a subject for an artist. One large room was filled with finished productions; the figures were admirably drawn, the colours deep and glowing, like the tints of stained glass; but the most characteristic part was the golden background, which was skilfully wrought into the most delicate scroll patterns, resembling fine chasing upon metal, but even more intricate and beautiful. Only a few of the objects exposed were for sale, and those not the best; two or three that we wished to buy were still wet, and we were obliged to content ourselves with a picture, not quite dry, of St. Sergius, a venerable old man with a flowing beard, in the act of giving his blessing, and a second, of the vision which appeared to the holy hermit in his cell. He is kneeling with extended arms, and before him stands the white draped figure of the Blessed Virgin, supported on either side by St. Peter and St. Paul. The group is minutely painted, and, with its scrolled

background of burnished gold, looks like a leaf from some old missal. We were delighted with our acquisitions, and many a time did we discuss the exact spot, in our own home, most likely to show off their merits.

In a third room they were busily working on the silver settings of the eikons. One pale monk was hammering a thin plate of metal upon a patterned form—embossing it; a second engraving rays of glory; a third gilding and burnishing. It was an interesting sight. At Troitsa hospitality is not extended to ladies unless they are veritable pilgrims; gentlemen may sit at the refectory board, and partake of the contents of those fish-kettles from which we had fled; they can also enjoy a little cheerful conversation in the dead languages with the Bursar. But for us there was nothing more to be done; womenkind are not even admitted to the library, for which we inquired. The studious monks do not like to be disturbed. We were told that the library consisted of less than four thousand books and MSS., a curious fact in so wealthy an establishment. The most valuable MS. it contains is a copy of the Gospels, dating from the early part of the thirteenth century.

With regret we had to take leave of the famous old walls. The monastery of Troitsa

is not only most curious in itself, but we felt how much the sight of it would increase our interest in many an old ruin from which the fish-kettles had vanished. We had had a peep into mediæval times, and in future imagination could re-people Rivaulx Abbey, and many another spot, with much greater truth and vigour. Wishing to have the last few minutes we were to spend in the sacred fortress to ourselves, we had sent the carriage on before, and passing under the lofty entrance, and over the disused drawbridge, we proceeded to examine the stalls outside. We were not rewarded for our pains. Common pottery, thin candles to light before the holy pictures, rude toys, dried fish, and rings of bread strung up in loops, were the chief commodities. We then drove off to visit the Catacombs, and the Hermitage of Gethsemane, the former being some five miles from the monastery. We passed through a long, dusty village of unbarked log-huts, placed far apart, one of which was pointed out by George as the bath-house, attached to every village, the inhabitants subscribing for its support.

The barbaric state of Russian roads would be astonishing, were it not borne in mind that Russia's best highways are rivers and canals, that there is water-communication between

all the great towns, and that for eight months in the year the roads, such as they are, and a camel track is smooth in comparison, lie hidden under deep snow, whilst the surface above is hard and level for sledging. But all the same the roads are abominable, and we rocked and rolled in a manner most unpleasant to "nervous females." About a mile from Troitsa stands a hermitage, founded by the late Metropolitan of Moscow, Philaret. The simple church, with the vessels used at the altar, are all of wood, but into it ladies are only admitted on the two feast days appointed in honour of the Assumption of the Virgin. The route was wild and pretty, mounting and descending through green woods of varied hue. Once we came to a wide, brawling stream, which we should have admired more had we not been preparing for an upset on the bridge; but Russian steeds conquer all difficulties, and tear over every obstacle. Finally we made a desperate rush up the brow of a high bank, and stopped before the Gethsemane. Here dwelt the holy Sergius before entering upon his more worldly career; and here, in the bowels of the earth, hermits still exist, men who never see the light of day—miserable, mad beings.

In the Middle Ages there were pillar-hermits

in Russia, others that roved about, like Basil, the insane friend of Ivan, who sat by the great Czar's side during the most splendid banquets unkempt and naked. Even the reforming Nicon patronized one utterly unclothed wretch, who used to share his table; and hermits have considerable influence in the country up to the present day. Entering a shed where small curiosities made by the monks of the Gethsemane are exposed for sale, lighted candles were put into our hands by the lank, greasy sacristan, who, like a caterpillar, would one day undergo a change, and swell out into a burly Pope. Following him down a steep flight of steps, we wound through narrow, slimy, descending passages, cut in the sandstone. There were creepy crawlers, and little rills of water, and occasionally we heard splash, splash, and a hoarse croak from a black corner. It was not a pleasant place, and the damp atmosphere was exceedingly chilly.

At last we arrived at an underground chapel —a dismal, mouldy little place, where there was no temptation to linger; and thence we passed into other dark passages, with low doors on each side, each door having an aperture with a grating, which could be slid back by the inmate of the cell, and through which food and water

were passed. There were eleven or twelve such cells, only one of which was inhabited. Its tenant comes forth once every year to receive the sacrament in the little chapel we had just visited. It was horrible to think that, only separated from us by a plank, crouched a human being, in dirt, darkness, and solitude, and, we were almost inclined to hope, idiotcy. The next cell had not been long vacant. For eleven years its late inmate had accepted his food in silence, but at last came no sign when it was offered. The door was broken open, the hermit found insensible, and removed to the infirmary, where he is looked upon as an oracle by all who approach. We entered the cell, which was about ten feet square, with brick walls and a floor of mud. The furniture consisted of a tattered straw-hat, a pitcher, and an earthen pipkin; but somehow or other we did not put complete faith in the stories told, and had a great idea that the hermits occasionally took a stroll in the upper world.

It was delightful to be again in the sunshine. We bought several articles, exquisitely carved—one, representing a calvary, placed under glass, cost five sous; a triptych of exquisite delicacy, twenty-five; and there were some curious crosses, which we did not fear to

purchase. A Russian does not like to possess a cross, still less to receive one as a present. He regards it as the sign of some cross he will have to bear himself, and shudders at the prospect. Hence the popular custom in the Eastern Church of wearing medals instead of the cross, so universal in the Latin Church. We also bought some spoons in wood and horn, of very curious forms. Our carriage deposited us at the station, where there was a tolerable restaurant. We had ample time for dinner, and for the concluding glass "which cheers."

The tea prepared by the Russian mode is most refreshing as a Summer drink. The overland tea produces a golden liquor, clear as the brightest sherry, and is rather weak than strong. A good deal of sugar is mixed with it; and two thin slices of lemon added. The glass tumblers are prettily mounted in frames of silver. As the train bore us away from the domes, towers, and spires of Troitsa, the sinking sun was casting its latest glow upon the old red battlements. The evening air was delightful. We flew along the level plain, passed the great nunnery, and rushed into the black forest, which looked solitary and mysterious; and our engine, which was heated with wood, belched forth showers of fiery spray. But as we neared Moscow,

the scene again presented an appearance of life and activity. Lights streamed from the châlets; strains of music issued forth; gay groups were lounging in the balconies and sitting amongst the flowers; and we had a serious discussion as to the feasibility of spending the next Summer in the cool forests of Muscovy.

Our carriage was waiting at the station, and in we got, with all our parcels, fatigued with our long day's work, and sank back in pleasing reverie, which was suddenly interrupted by our being violently thrown against one another. The carriage rocked, all our treasures shot off into the bottom, we heard the near shriek of an engine, and our horses, tearing round at an angle, rushed off into the black night. On we flew, at a giddy pace, holding tight, but we managed to let down the windows. We expected every moment to crash against something, or to be upset; but the panting horses presently recovered from their alarm—their screeching enemy had fled, their efforts relaxed, they were stopped, patted, talked to, encouraged, and finally turned about. We picked up our parcels, and reached our hotel, thankful to find our heads on our shoulders.

Our next day was again a busy one. The kind doctor came to say adieu, the Consul

arrived with the letter in Russian which, presented at a certain address, was to procure accommodation for us at Nijni-Novgorod. He also brought our tickets for the steamer. We had taken our places as far as Tsaritsyn, a five days' journey, for which we paid four pounds each, not including provisions. We then set off to the Chinese town, to make purchases. We bought a large flat basket, very like an Epsom luncheon hamper, which was to serve for all sorts of odds and ends, and would be useful in our cabin. We also purchased a padlock for it. (Moscow is celebrated for brass padlocks). We ordered, moreover, a pint of spirits of wine for our lamp; and got some sugar, lemons, and a pound of excellent tea, for which we paid two rubles—an ordinary family price; but for the pekoe flower as much as ten rubles will be given by connoisseurs. We then went to the Gostinnoi, in search of Toula work, a mixture of silver and steel, which is rather pretty. We looked longingly at the niello spoons; but they were too dear. At last we came home, hot and dusty, to dine. In the cool of the evening we set off to bid adieu to "the golden-headed Kremlin." We drank in once more its beauty, looked down for the last time upon the richly-coloured city with

a sigh of regret, loitered for a moment by the side of the giant Ivan Veliki, paused to listen once more to the silvery chimes, bent our heads as the fierce sentry made his usual step towards us, passed under the Spaski Gate, and left the grand old fortress behind us, probably for ever.

CHAPTER XIII.

Departure by Rail for Nijni—Vladimir—Our Jewish Fellow-Traveller—Amusing Scene—Russian Paper Money—Arrival at Nijni—Bridge of Boats over the Volga—Ladies alone in a Foreign Land—The Sterlet—The Volga—Fair of Nijni-Novgorod—Assemblage at the Fair—Group of Sacred Buildings—Minim's Tower—Church of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin—Crowd on the River Banks—The Kremlin.

DURING the fair an express train leaves Moscow for Nijni every afternoon at four o'clock. Our transit to the station was unpleasant; it lay at least two miles from the town. The road, as usual, was infamous, and the dust fully half a foot deep. There was a considerable bustle at the railway, and with some difficulty George procured chairs, and brought them into the small waiting-room, which, judging from the appearance of a very dirty table-cloth, was also used for refreshments. Heaps of flies collected on the soiled linen; the sun glared in through

the curtainless windows, and the confusion was indescribable. George departed to take tickets, but came back discomfited. Every place in the train about to depart was taken, but another was to start in half an hour, and there was nothing for it but to wait with patience.

After the departure of the first convoy, there was comparative peace; but it was weary work waiting in the heat and glare, and we rejoiced when we were told to take up a position close to the wooden barrier which separated us from the haven we longed for; for the empty carriages were on the other side of it. The scene around was amusing. Most of the people appeared to be shopkeepers and small merchants, and there was scarcely one of them who was not charged with a large chintz-covered pillow and a teapot, so that they resembled nothing so much as ants on the move with their larvæ. We stood as close as possible to our luggage, which had been poked under the wooden railing, George endeavouring to protect us from the crowd behind. In consequence of a liberal distribution of tea-money, we were dragged through the half-open door a little before the rest of the crowd.

It was delightful to take possession of comfortable corner seats, and to settle our packages

at our ease. There were not many first-class passengers, and we had begun to flatter ourselves that we should have no one in the carriage, when a man and woman appeared at the door. The former whispered to his companion in German, "There are only ladies in the carriage—this will do." In he got alone, rather to our dismay. He was a queer subject for a first-class passenger, dirty, poorly dressed, and evidently a Jew. Why should he wish to be with ladies alone? It was very mysterious. Would he rob and murder us in the night? Had he watched us returning from the bank in the afternoon, and should we be quietly put out of the way, and no more heard of? We did not like it at all; however, there was no help for it. Off went the train a little past six o'clock, and, in spite of the German Jew, who had quietly settled down in a corner along with his flabby carpet-bag, the evening was delightful.

It is 273 miles from Moscow to Nijni-Novgorod, great part of the route lying across the fertile province of Vladimir, the richest in all Russia—a well-wooded country, with great stretches of corn-land, comfortable farm-houses, and handsome châteaux, very unlike the wild Muscovy forests, or the dreary plains towards

Smolensk. Our first halt was forty miles from Moscow, at the small town of Pavlofsk, famous for its chintz manufactories. After this, our German woke up to life, and began to converse. Having informed himself as to our nationality, he told us that he was acquainted with England, and had been concerned in trade at Manchester.

It was bright moonlight when we reached Petushki, where there was a buffet, and the crowd was so great that we thankfully accepted our companion's offer to procure coffee for us. We began to think that, after all, we should not be murdered, and our minds were quite set at rest when, returning to the carriage, our friend proposed to vacate, and leave us alone for the night. But we would not hear of such a proposition, so he did the next best thing by curling himself up, and going quietly to sleep. We kept our eyes open as long as we could, the moon-lit landscape was so beautiful; but at last they closed, and we woke up all of a sudden, roused by the shriek of the engine, and looking out, saw a miniature Kremlin, the bulbous domes and dentellated walls standing out sharp against the clear sky, and the golden crosses glittering in the moonbeams. We had reached Vladimir. We

had a fancy for the place, for was not Vladimir founded by the son-in-law of our own Harold? At one time we had thought of stopping there, but, with the exception of jewels, images, and costly robes, of which we had seen enough, there was nothing, we were told, particularly curious remaining.

The original wooden cathedral was founded in 1154; but, either by war or fire, church after church perished. One edifice was destroyed by Baty Khan, in 1238. When his Tartar hordes took Vladimir, they heaped it round with wood, and it was entirely consumed, along with the Princess of Vladimir, her three sons, and a daughter, as well as the principal people of the city, who had taken refuge within its walls. Its successor suffered greatly from fire in the year 1774, and again fell a victim to the flames in the beginning of this century. The greater part of the present building dates from the year 1834. Leaving Vladimir behind, we passed over the silvery Kliasma, a broad stream of some importance, which kept us company at intervals until daybreak, when it meandered away in some other direction. As the sun rose over the rich woods and fresh green meadows, we were still in the province of Vladimir, the scenery of which was exceedingly

rural and pretty. The towns we stopped at were all small. At Viazniki, which is famous for its linen, we had a quarter of an hour; and here our German, none the cleaner for his night's repose, sent us coffee and rolls. All the people turned out of their carriages to stretch themselves, and it was amusing to see them, one after another, dip their heads into tubs of water which were placed in a row for that purpose. The operation must have been very refreshing, and we longed to follow their example.

It was six o'clock, but the train was long and heavy, and we were still two hours from our destination. To beguile the time, our friend drew out a large pocket-book, which looked as if it was going to burst, and asked us if we had ever seen any Russian bank-notes. On hearing that our knowledge of them was limited, he showed us some of extraordinary size—for, the larger the sum represented, the bigger the paper. These notes were beautifully engraved with scrolls and the heads of deceased sovereigns, among whom was Peter with his fierce eyes, and Catherine with her strapping shoulders. Our friend told us that the paper-money so profusely issued in her reign had suffered such depreciation that, when

called in in the year 1825, it was only worth a quarter of the original sum. At present the paper and the silver ruble are of the same value. We opened our eyes at the number of notes produced by our Jew. Smiling at our surprise, he said:—"Ah, ladies, this handful is nothing to the sum I have about me. Feel my coat; it is thickly-lined throughout with paper-money;" and, truly, the old brown cloth was stiff with its precious burden. The crisp notes crackled as he stroked it down. Now we understood why he had been anxious to travel with ladies only. He was going to Nijni to speculate in cotton goods. Nothing could induce him to accept payment for the coffee and cakes he had so liberally pressed upon us, which was rather distressing; but he was most civil in offering to be of service to us at the end of our journey, and was quite astonished to hear that we had secured accommodation at an hotel, for the general fate of ladies during the fair is to remain for the night in the chamber at the railway-station.

Long before our arrival there, Nijni appeared to be close to us. We had, for some reason or other, to curve round it; but we saw from afar the churches and domes of its Kremlin, which stood on a high ridge of hill, whilst the blue Oka

twisted about on the plain below, but the mighty Volga was, in some manner, concealed from us. There was great confusion at the station, and how my companion contrived to get the luggage put upon a drosky was a marvel. Our German had disappeared, and we were sorry we had not had an opportunity of saying good-bye to him; but our own affairs soon engrossed all our attention. Not one word could we say, so we pointed out the direction on our letter to the Ivostchik, who, not being able to read, scratched his head. A few more Ivostchiks came up, and there was a great chattering amongst them, but matters did not seem to advance. At last a benevolent Russian, of six feet four, came to the rescue, and, looking at the paper, gave the proper instructions to the driver, and off we set. The dust lay so deep that all traces of road were effaced, and the open ground was full of ruts and holes. We ran up banks all sideways, but descended into a pit before we had time to be overturned; how we and our luggage stuck on was a perfect wonder. To turn into something resembling a street was a great relief, and at length, drawing up before a dismal, tumble-down colonnade, our Ivostchik pointed to a house. My companion alighted, and went in

search of Monsieur G——, the gentleman who had been desired to engage rooms for us. In due time she returned, accompanied by a little sickly-looking youth, with a white apron, who proved to be the individual in question. What he was, we never exactly found out, but imagined that he was an apothecary. He had, however, found accommodation for the night at the Hôtel Labasheff, the best the place afforded, though somewhat distant from the fair, and for which we were to pay the not-ruinous price of fifteen francs.

Thanking Monsieur, who looked most desponding, we set off once more, feeling very forlorn, two unprotected females, unable to speak or comprehend a dozen words of the language, wafted into the centre of Russia without a single friend, choked with the dust, tired, hot, and hungry. But on approaching the giant Volga we forgot our woes. From each side of the great stream arose forests of masts, leaving the centre of the swift river clear for the strange craft busily employed upon its ample bosom. We crossed a stupendous bridge of boats, thronged by strange, wild people, some clad in gaudy chintz, others walking bundles of skins, with long beards and stout staves. On each side there were booths full of fruit, fish, and

common wares, some of which had the appearance of eating-houses. The scene was most animated, and as we bowled over the smooth planks, we had time to contemplate it at our leisure.

Reaching *terra firma*, we drew up at a large decent-looking house, and presenting a paper given to us by Monsieur G——, were conducted upstairs by a dishevelled Chelovek, and found ourselves installed in four large rooms, with two ante-chambers partitioned off. Our sunduks (trunks) were brought up by a second man, and then we all four began to talk and gesticulate as hard as we could, without the least chance of making one another understand; and having come to that satisfactory conclusion, we looked at each other in silence. A brilliant idea, however, suddenly struck Chelovek the first. He abruptly left the room, and, after a considerable absence, returned with a young lady, who, to our great joy, spoke a little German. We made her understand that we wanted a good breakfast, a *commissionnaire* who could speak something besides Russian, and a carriage for the day. This matter settled, we set to work on our dusty garments, and, oh! what a relief to cast them aside, open a box, and get out a few clean, crisp articles of toilet.

Water was the next consideration. The basins were fixed into stands, with cocks above them, which we believed to place the whole Volga at our disposal; but the basins were nothing but sieves, the bottoms being formed of wire. This was a considerable puzzle, for we were not then aware that no Russian ever plunges even his hands into water; he soaps them, and then his servant, if he has one, pours water upon them, or, if he serves himself, as in our case, he turns the cock, and puts them under it.

A welcome jingling of cups announced the arrival of breakfast, and, nothing loth, we sat down to a very comfortable and substantial meal, for the first time tasting the far-famed sterlet, which will only live in the waters of the Volga. It is forwarded to the capital in tanks, a couple of guineas being a moderate Summer price for a fish the size of a large trout, but in Winter they can be conveyed in a frozen state, and are therefore cheaper. It is a remarkably ugly fish, with a head resembling a pike. The substance is oily and rich, and the yellow flesh has a deep layer of dark fat upon it. The caviare made from the roe of the sterlet is considered much more delicate than that of the sturgeon. Our windows commanded a good view over the Volga, and we beguiled the time by looking at

the river. The Volga is very broad, broader than any inland river we had ever seen, and the banks were monotonous and muddy.

We were very glad when the *commissionnaire* made his appearance. He was a greasy-looking Jew, not much to our taste, but spoke German, and announced that he had brought a carriage. It was a curious sort of vehicle, with a hood, and a seat for two, mounted high upon spidery wheels, with a handsome pair of spirited white horses, one running in shafts, the other loosely attached to his companion. Off we set in gallant style. The Fair of Nijni is held on a tract of low ground between the Volga and the Oka, quite away from the better part of the town. In the old chronicles mention is made of the annual arrival of merchants in the neighbourhood, as early as the fourteenth century. The fair, however, does not seem to have been planted near this spot until a couple of hundred years later. In the reign of the Emperor Paul it was farmed by a company, who erected new buildings, and paid an annual sum of £2,500 to government. The money which changed hands was then estimated at £12,000; but now the government charges itself with the care of the buildings, and levies a duty partly for that purpose, partly to pay off the debt

contracted in their erection. The sales and purchases are now valued at sixteen millions sterling, a sum which seems almost incredible, until one considers that almost every town in all the Russias derives its chief supplies from this vast mart, where numerous stores of merchandise and raw produce are collected, to be partially re-distributed in the very provinces from whence they came. The expense attending this system is very great, and long credit is given. The arrangements made with regard to the buildings are considered very perfect. They stand upon a net-work of sewers, which are flooded from the Volga twice a day, a very necessary precaution, considering that a million of people are supposed to assemble on the occasion, and that during the hottest time of the year. The fair lasts six weeks, and commences on the 27th of July, Russian style. In order to obtain some idea of the number of visitors, the bakers are obliged to make a return of the quantity of bread they sell—a very loose way, it would seem, of calculating the population.

Crossing the ever-amusing bridge, our steeds bore us at full gallop through a district of open streets, if streets they could be called, for there were houses dotted down anywhere. By the wayside were high sloping banks of sun-scorched

mud, probably used as thoroughfares when wet weather renders the lower level impassable. These banks were now covered with people, rising tier above tier, some eating from the contents of their leathern wallets, others drinking from bright-coloured gourds, engraved with strange devices, or stretched in slumber on the ground, the poorest of the crowds which flock from afar, and have no other shelter than that afforded by the friendly banks and the heaven above—a wild, skin-clad crew, numbers of them probably bound to claim a blessing at the holy shrine of St. Sergius at Troitsa. On we sped at full speed, out of one hole and into another, the steed in the shafts pulling one way, its companion, with little to restrain it, dragging another, and scattering masses of people right and left. The heat, the dust, the narrow escapes, made it almost insupportable, and we were thankful to arrive at the part of the fair which we wished to visit first—the square where the governor's house was situated—the governor of the fair, be it understood, not the governor of the town, who has an official residence in the Kremlin. Here the smaller and more amusing objects are exposed for sale in great covered labyrinths. Affairs were in an early stage, and there was no great crowd.

The grave Persians appeared more intent upon their pipes than anything else; some were sleeping upon their bales, others lazily stacking piles of carpets, or arranging shawls and embroidered scarfs from Bokhara. There were gaudy cottons, blades from Khiva, and venerable Armenians, with eagle eyes, were vending strings of amber, perfumes, pastilles, and amulets made from rose-leaves. An Eastern proverb tells that it takes ten Christians to beat a Jew, and ten Jews to impose upon an Armenian. Here and there a large-turbaned Turk sat cross-legged, his comfortable carpet placed in the midst of his wares, consisting of specimens of leather-work, pomegranate-stained slippers, and mother-of-pearl, besides a thousand glittering trinkets, sipping away at his coffee with an air of abstraction which presented an amusing contrast to the active, well-furred Siberian, whose stalls claimed our first attention. There were all sorts of caskets, made of beautiful marbles, and lovely specimens of *pietra dura* in high relief, great bunches of amethyst grapes, cherries, strawberries, and currants, embedded in leaves of some substance resembling jade-stone. We bought a box enriched by an endless variety of jaspers cut into squares, bevelled at the sides, and set in beau-

tiful dove-coloured porphyry. Malachite was plentiful, but not well worked, and the boxes reminded us so much of their imitations in the Burlington Arcade that we would have nothing to say to them. The specimens of topaz and *aqua marina* were fine, but we were aware that anything bought through the intervention of our attendant Jew would be charged at double its value, and we consequently made few purchases. My companion, however, carried off a glittering cross of yellow topaz and crystal, handsome Siberian stones, and not dear. The sly-looking Tartars, in fur caps and chintz robes, were busy over their wares of japanned wood, leather-work, and cottons. The objects from Circassia made a great show—embroidered belts and gossamer scarves, richly worked in coloured silks; and there were stalls for Toula work, and niello in silver and steel.

Round the great square itself ran wooden colonnades, underneath which were congregated the shops of the silversmiths and metal-workers; but we preferred the sombre labyrinths, where we could see everything without trouble, The larger stores are collected in vast rows of wooden warehouses, which we determined to visit later in the day. Close to the square stands an harmonious group of buildings—a

Russian cathedral, a Tartar mosque, aud an Armenian church. The Buddhists will not bring their gods from afar, and put off public prayer until they return home. A couple of hours fled rapidly, and then we got into the carriage, intent upon seeing the cabin which we were to inhabit for so many days.

The vessels belonging to the English company lay on the right bank of the Volga. We therefore recrossed the bridge of boats, where a good deal of greasy eating was still going on, and galloped along the river's bank for nearly a mile and a half, when we got into a boat, and rowed off to the steamer. The ship was of a good size, but narrow in proportion to its length. The utmost confusion reigned on board, and we had to navigate between pails and streams of dirty water, and to avoid the mops which, being vigorously twirled in the air, scattered clouds of spray. Out rushed the captain in his shirt-sleeves, a tall, light-haired, blue-eyed German, who seemed to have been undergoing renovation. He addressed us in English, and the sounds fell pleasantly upon our ears. Hearing that we were about to become his passengers, he implored us not to sleep on board; upon which we laughed, and told him of the magnificent suite of rooms we were en-

joying at the Hôtel Labasheff, a fact which seemed to surprise him not a little. He further explained that, sailing in the morning, he had in general no objection to allow first-class passengers to come on board the night before, but that at that moment he was in a difficulty, an accident having happened to the sister boat, which obliged him to take her place on the return journey—hard work, as he had only just arrived with nearly six hundred passengers, and it was all that the crew could do to cleanse the vessel, and get her ready for the morrow's start. He accompanied us over the ship. There was a good ladies' cabin in the stern, with plenty of couches and windows, a neatly fitted-up chamber for the gentlemen mid-ships, and four private cabins. He chose one for us on the shady side of the boat, and we parted, shaking hands and receiving his admonition to be in good time next morning, as he sailed precisely at ten. All being thus satisfactorily arranged, we returned to the carriage greatly relieved in mind.

Our Jew guide was determined that we should visit Minim's Tower, an object of no particular interest in itself, but it crowns the highest point of the hilly range against which the town is built. The ascent lay up a steep

road, which skirted one side of the Kremlin; and as we marked the long stretches of dentellated wall which climbed up and down, encircling the broad plateau on which the buildings stand, it looked every inch a fortress, and a strong one, too. We had no great fancy for Minim, and should have preferred an immediate visit to the Kremlin; but that was reserved for the evening, and it was a waste of energy to dispute the point, impossible indeed to do so in our fatigued condition. We were rewarded for our meekness by obtaining a capital view of the town and the inlying country, with its wild steppes and deep ravines. We did not ascend the tower, the more distant prospect being obscured by the golden haze which lay over the sunlit plain.

On our return we passed through many wide streets, bordered by large, substantial, old-fashioned houses, with roofs of painted copper—some red, others green. Occasionally the white or buff walls were enlivened by a bit of coarse fresco, depicting some sacred subject. There were also odd arched gateways, with coloured lamps above them, which shed their feeble rays upon some time-honoured image, so black that the horse-shoe glory alone attracted the eye. It was a pleasant, quaint old town,

which held its own, and looked calmly down upon the scattered million of human beings swarming at its feet. Though anxious to get home, we turned aside at the bottom of the hill, to visit a most wonderful-looking church, encircled by low walls. Every inch of it was covered by eccentric patterns, embossed, and painted bright red upon a white ground, a bell-tower of many stories being ornamented in a similar manner. Very different in character, it was almost as extraordinary an object as the church of our Moscow friend, St. Basil; but the church of the Rogdestva, or Nativity of the Holy Virgin, is not nearly so old, having been built by one of the Stroganoff family, at the commencement of the last century. The low interior had an almost Moorish aspect.

Reaching our hotel, it was most refreshing to turn the stream of water upon our hands, and allow it to flow at leisure. Finding also that by aid of a good sponge we could deluge our faces, we came to the conclusion that the Russian system of ablution was not so bad a one after all. Dinner was most acceptable, the cabbage-soup being served with its usual rich accompaniment of sour cream. We made another essay upon the sterlet; and the salted

cherries and currants, if not exactly palatable, were very pretty to look at; but here, as in Moscow, the peculiar musky flavour of the herb we so much disliked pervaded everything. As soon as the horses were sufficiently rested, we again drove down to the fair, being anxious to get some lapis lazuli, which is said to have become exceedingly rare since the Crimean War; though why or wherefore we could not imagine. Our steeds bore us over the bridge more vigorously than ever; and our coachman, we imagined, had taken his share of barley in the shape of vodka. To make matters more agreeable, the horse, in his loose traces, took to standing on his hind legs, and turning round to gaze at us. We scattered the wayfarers right and left; and how we avoided a serious accident was marvellous.

The mud-banks were more crowded than ever, some of the people resembling wild animals more than men, furs and skins being apparently their only wardrobe—worn even in the hottest weather; as the Russians, unbraced by cold water, are exceedingly afraid of a chill. Round caps, with lappets to tie over the mouth, appeared fashionable; a pair of red gleaming eyes, and the tip of a nose, were the only signs to indicate that there was a human being

within the cumbersome mass of sheep-skin or cow-hide. Amongst the women, the gipsies were to be distinguished by their dishevelled locks, ardent eyes, and the general prevalence of mustard colour in their garments. There were some wonderfully wrinkled old women, with red-striped handkerchiefs round their heads.

We had great difficulty in finding the lapis lazuli; but the search amongst the different stalls was amusing, and at last we procured three morsels for studs, and a couple of large buttons. The vendor was a burly Siberian, with an amber coat, which fitted tight as far as the waist, where it was gathered into thick pleats; a half-conical cap of bear-skin, mingling with his hair and beard, completed the costume. We drove next to the tea-quarter—a district a little apart, near the Oka; but its streets were silent and deserted, the caravans not having yet arrived. The houses, built in the Chinese style, precisely resembled photographs which we had seen of streets in Canton. But the overland trade in tea has fallen off greatly since the Government has removed the prohibition which forbade its entrance by sea. Being in these days carefully packed, it is considered as good as the overland; and as it is cheaper, it is

of course more popular. The Siberian Street consists of long rows of wooden sheds, in which the ores are stowed away. It is above a mile in length, and for convenience situated close to the Volga. Then there are other districts, full of hides, grease, hemp, mustard, paper, enormous quantities of dried fish and coarse caviare, wine from the Caucasus, vodka, salt, and every sort of raw material. Driving in and out of these vast depôts, some idea is gained of the immense wealth stored at Nijni during the fair.

At last we reached a very cut-throat-looking quarter, with bundles of cotton gowns and tattered shubas suspended outside the tumble-down huts. All of a sudden we drew up in the middle of the way—for street or road it could not be called; it was literally a quarter of a yard deep in dust. Our Jew, whom I held in aversion, descended from his box, and asked, "Did we want any jewels?" "No." "If we would only look at some!—there were such bargains to be had—strings of pearls, turquoise, and brilliants that would make our mouths water." Hereupon ensued a difference of opinion between myself and my companion. I felt sure that we should be abominably cheated. I was hot, cross, dirty, and exhausted, and wanted to be off to the Kremlin. But she was all

for the jewels, and off she walked with the Jew, dived under the door of a disreputable-looking hut, and disappeared, leaving me upright, sulky, and indignant. The strangest figures came flitting by; there was one man in a chintz dressing-gown of the brightest hue, who wore a queer triangular cap with a metal drop at each corner and two long plaited tails of hair down his back, looking precisely as if he had walked off a tea-caddy. Another was stalking along in a skirt of silk cut perfectly straight, with two brilliantly striped aprons, one in front and the other behind; he also had long tails. A third wore a kind of white cotton blouse embroidered in scarlet and black. I set them down to be Chinese, but was afterwards told that they were Tartars from Kazan. These original figures served to amuse me until the return of my companion, who came back at last, having bought nothing, though she had a little morocco case in her hand containing a pair of earrings which she greatly coveted, and very pretty they were—sprigs of turquoise, and small brilliants which sparkled brightly, and were offered at a low price. After some hesitation they were sent back with half the money demanded, and less than a quarter of the original sum asked. It was accepted, however, and off we set with

our newly-acquired treasure, which, it is to be feared, was stolen property.

My companion then gave me the history of her adventures. The hut she had entered—a very dirty one—was hung round with all sorts of old clothes, which were far from odoriferous. It was occupied by a skinny old woman and several men. After a few words in Russian with our Jew, the old woman turned all the men out of the hut, locked the door, and proceeded to fumble amongst a lot of rags in the corner, from whence she produced two small bundles, knotted up in tattered pocket handkerchiefs, and lighting a lamp with a great glaring wick, she spread their contents upon a ricketty table—exquisite strings of pearls, turquoise, diamond rings, ornaments in brilliants, and other precious stones. The wretched cabin, the wrinkled old hag with her eager eyes, the flare of the lamp upon the jewels, must have been a sight worth seeing, and having lost it, I repented of my bad temper. However, as a set-off, I knew that I should have been frightened out of my wits at being fastened into such a den.

We did not visit the ten miles of wharf which border the Volga and Oka, but set off at once to the Kremlin, which I was childishly impatient

to see. This fortress dates from the year 1372, but the present walls were erected by a Venetian architect in the sixteenth century. They enclose a great extent of ground, but it must be remembered that the walls of these Kremlins encircled the whole of the original towns. The ascent was considerable; the road wound up the steep brow of the hill, and our impatient steeds were thoroughly out of breath when they passed under the massive gateway and entered the wide area. The Kremlin of Nijni-Novgorod is old, stately, and solid, but the buildings do not possess any special beauty. Within it stands the governor's house, the law-courts, barracks, arsenal, and the Spaspreobrajenié, or Transfiguration Cathedral—a plain, white-washed building, with overhanging roof, fine bulbous domes, and a resplendent golden cross. Opposite the entrance-door stands a pedestal, which supports statues in bronze of Nijni's hero, Minim, and of Prince Bojarski. A large tract of unoccupied ground stretches from these buildings to the face of the cliff, along which runs a broad terrace, from which is a most curious and extensive view, bounded alone by the horizon.

The evening was stormy and the atmosphere exceedingly clear; in the distance earth and sky

mingled together in a vapour of deep blue; dark clouds lay in heavy masses, and one great rent disclosed a glorious line of crimson light; there might have been a burning world behind that black curtain. We could distinguish great tracts of forest and patches of corn-land. The soil of this great plain, being alluvial, is very fertile, and every Spring the overflowing rivers spread far and near their rich deposit. We could see where the mighty Volga flowed along in one broad, majestic line, and after running its course of 2,500 miles, hydra-like, pours its life-blood into the Caspian by seventy mouths. It may well be a proud river—it bears upon its bosom cottons, machinery, and ships from England; fish, oil, and furs from the White Sea; ores and marbles from Siberia; rich bales from India and Persia; wine, fruit, and hemp from the Caspian—its own stream and shores yielding enormous quantities of salted fish, caviare, hides, tallow, and bone manure, which is largely exported. But, strange to say, the Volga has no communication with the Don, although their broad waters are ouly separated by a steppe of fifty miles in extent. The Oka, which twisted about the plain at our feet, may, indeed, be said to connect the Volga and the Sea of Azoff through tributories and canals, but in a very

tortuous manner. For nearly an hour we sat gazing down upon the superb and fruitful plain, and felt it strange to be sitting there almost in the centre of civilized Russia, our faces turned to the setting sun, and behind us 5,000 miles of swelling steppes, here divided by a river, there by a mountain chain, some covered with soft sweet sward, others yielding a tall harvest of prairie flowers and grass, and so on, far, far away, rolling at last into the Pacific, near which they are clad under the snow in a deep warm garment of nutritious moss; but even on that distant strand (the stranger may behold) the glittering cross and streaming chains reared high on many a copper bulb—emblems of Russia's faith, and land-marks of her piety and power.

On reaching our hotel, my companion aired her dozen words of Russian by ordering a couple of glasses of tea. The golden liquid proved most refreshing, for we were thoroughly tired by the night's journey and the excitements of the day. Having discussed the contents of our tumblers, we began to prepare for bed; but found that they had not been made, a mattress and a single sheet being the only preparations as yet visible. My companion flew to her vocabulary, and saluted the unfortunate Chelovek, for whom she rang, with words of wrath, whilst I

pointed majestically to the undraped bedsteads. The poor man was utterly bewildered, but at last, with an air of deep thought, withdrew. We hailed the sound of his returning footsteps, expecting him to enter with his arms full of sheets, blankets, and pillows. Opening the door, however, he laid a very small sheet upon the table, made a hasty salaam, and withdrew, before we had time to get out another word. But we had made what our Elsinore friends would have called an experience, and afterwards learned that Russian innkeepers never supply either bed or bedding. We had been lucky to find even bedsteads at Nijni, as no well-to-do native would use any bedding but his own, and no doubt our Chelovek considered us to be utter barbarians, as we had brought neither skins nor pillows. We made the mattresses as comfortable as we could with linen and shawls; and, that little matter settled, proceeded to experimentalize upon the sieves we were to wash in. Mounting on a chair, I was indulging one foot with a delicious *douche*, when I heard a sound between a laugh and a cry from the next room, followed by an exclamation of "Oh, do come and help me!" My companion had come to grief, having managed to wriggle herself under the cock in such a manner that the water squirt-

ed out in every direction, scattering brisk showers upon her night paraphernalia. There appeared to be no end to our small misfortunes; but at last we thankfully lay down, wished one another pleasant dreams, and with reverent feeling bade good night to the mild-looking saint who had been so calmly regarding our troubles from his elevated corner.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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